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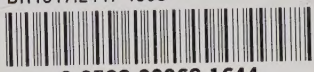
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Liberal Theology

and

The Ground of Faith

Essays towards a Conservative
Re-Statement of Apologetic

BY

HAKLUYT EGERTON

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TO MY WIFE

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PREFACE

THE essays published in this volume have been written as a contribution towards a conservative re-statement of religious thought.

The need for some kind of re-statement is widely recognised. Men's minds are fermenting with new ideas that touch the fundamental problems of life, and to these ideas the Church's message must, in one way or another, be adjusted. Now, there are two ways of adjustment. Mr. Campbell has shown us one way. Whatever be the ground and character of his personal faith—and it seems clear that Mr. Campbell's personal faith is but imperfectly interpreted by the body of doctrine associated with his name—he propounds for our acceptance a certain philosophical conception of God's relation to the world, and from that conception he deduces a system of thought which is essentially non-Christian.[1] Many, indeed, who do not recognise the importance of the New Theology, tell us complacently that Mr. Campbell has not a philosophy. They would have us believe that Mr. Campbell's theology is an

[1] For proof of this see my essay, *Is the New Theology Christian?*

individual eccentricity—peculiar to himself. All this is thoroughly mistaken. The New Theology is not the aberrant adventure of a solitary thinker: it is the appropriate name for a widely-spread movement of thought. Moreover, Mr. Campbell *has* a philosophy—indeed, the New Theology, as he presents it, is essentially a philosophical construction which derives only illustration from the evangelical sources. His philosophy, it is true, is not always clearly expressed, nor is it free from admixture,[1] but its essential character seems clear: it is a form of Hegelianism. According to Mr. Campbell, Ultimate Reality is Infinite Consciousness, and all the particulars of the world are derived from that Consciousness by an eternal process of self-expression or self-realization. This cosmological doctrine is unmistakably a form of Hegelian thought, and it is the one essential conception in Mr. Campbell's New Theology.

We are sometimes told that Mr. Campbell is not a philosopher, and has no claim to be "taken seriously" when he attempts to make use of philosophy. The argument is a dangerous one, for the *tu quoque* answer—did Mr. Campbell condescend to it—would be widely destructive. Whatever be the degree of Mr. Campbell's competence or incompetence in philosophy, it is incontrovertible that

[1] See *Is the New Theology Christian?* pp. 45–49.

the most "serious," the most important (if not the only important) thing in his New Theology, is the philosophical conception with which it starts.

Mr. Campbell, I have said, has shown us one kind of adjustment—a kind which we may conveniently designate Liberal. Now, I do not suggest that all Liberal Theology is disguised "Campbellism," nor yet that Mr. Campbell fairly represents those Anglican teachers who are ordinarily described as Liberal. Mr. Campbell does, indeed, illustrate one kind of adjustment, but he illustrates it in an extreme form. Yet, because he really illustrates the Liberal adjustment, his New Theology must have something in common with the more modest ventures which also illustrate that adjustment. What is that common character? Is it not this—rejection of the miraculous?[1]

What do we mean by "the miraculous"? An event is miraculous if it be an exceptional act of Divine power.[2] The uniformities apparent in the sequence of events are, we say, perduring modes of Divine operation: a miracle is the result of the Divine power acting in an exceptional way—acting

[1] Let there be no misunderstanding. I do not say "rejection of the spiritual," nor even "rejection of the supernatural," but "rejection of the miraculous."

[2] A miracle is an "intervention."

outside those uniformities of operation which together constitute, as it were, the body of natural law.

The physical sciences presuppose the *dynamic* unity of Nature—the unity defined or indicated by the two great laws of physical conservation.[1] The Hegelian philosophy sets forth a *rational* unity—the unity illustrated by the logical advance of the Hegelian dialectic. The physical sciences presuppose that the physical world is a closed system of events, and that every event within that system is to be completely explained by the antecedent distribution of matter and force. Hegelianism teaches that events constitute a rational system of dialectical *becoming*, and that every event is to be completely explained by its position within that system.

Both the scientific and the philosophical conceptions exclude all thought of the miraculous, for a miracle would be inconsistent with the unity of process they severally affirm. On the one hand it would be inconsistent with the world's physical unity—with the conservation of matter and energy. On the other hand it would be inconsistent with the world's logical unity—with the rational sequences of its dialectical development.

This, then, is the characteristic note of the Liberal

[1] The law of the conservation of matter and the law of the conservation of energy.

adjustment—rejection of the miraculous. That note, it is true, is not always obvious, but in Mr. Campbell's teaching it is unmistakable. The pastor of the City Temple rejects all the evangelical miracles that he cannot explain away. He affirms, indeed—in a non-Catholic sense—the Divine nature of our Lord, but (because he believes every finite particular to be similarly divine) he denies the essential uniqueness of our Lord's Person.

There is, I know, a strong tendency in many quarters to isolate Mr. Campbell—to minimise the importance of his New Theology by ignoring its vital connection with more moderate forms of Liberal thought. We may not thus trifle with facts. Liberal Theology in the Church of England is not "City-Templeism," but certain forms of that theology have been profoundly influenced by the philosophical conceptions which have created "City-Templeism." For instance, like that aberrant creed, they involve or presuppose the fundamental doctrine of the Hegelian cosmology—the doctrine, namely, that finite particulars are so many forms or aspects of Absolute Existence, and constitute a developing system of which the unity is the unity of the dialectic process. Now, this doctrine, if consistent with Theism, is consistent only with Pantheism. Moreover, it logically excludes the conception of miracle, and, therefore, is not consistent with the Catholic

interpretation of Our Lord's Person.[1] It permits us to speak of Incarnation, because (according to it) every individual spirit is a form or aspect or part of the Absolute. It does *not*, however, permit us to believe that the Incarnation made our Lord an essentially unique Person, because (according to it) God is incarnate in each one of us in precisely the same way as in Our Lord.[2]

Pantheism and rejection of the miraculous—these, in certain forms, are the distinctive notes of Hegelianism in theology. These notes are exceptionally conspicuous in Mr. Campbell's teaching: they are less plainly (but not less really) present in contemporary forms of Anglican thought.

Now, these are facts of far more importance than alleged "Romanizing" in doctrine and ritual, for the Christian religion—"as this Church and Realm hath received the same"—is certainly not Pantheistic, and is (quite as certainly) miraculous.

It may be that Christian men have sometimes, in their thoughts, made God too remote from His world: the true corrective of this mistake is not to be found in Pantheism.[3] It may be that they

[1] Cp. pp. 65–73.

[2] This brings us, if not to Mr. Campbell's Christology, at least within easily measurable distance of it.

[3] Nor yet in the doctrine of Divine Immanence. See *Is the New Theology Christian?* pp. 118–121.

have sometimes in the past given too wide an extension to the domain of miracle—but, unless the Church has misinterpreted her Lord, His Person is essentially miraculous, and, if It be not miraculous, the Christian religion should be radically transformed.

The Liberal adjustment, then, cannot satisfy us, because it is inconsistent with the essential character of the Christian religion. But is any other adjustment possible ? I believe that another adjustment *is* possible, and in the essays to which these lines are prefatory an attempt is made towards that alternative adjustment.

The essay on Liberal Theology is, in part, a criticism of those conceptions of uniformity—of the uniformity of Nature and of the uniformity of History—which so widely pre-dispose the modern world against a miraculous religion. There is no need to summarize in this place the details of that criticism,[1] but one may conveniently indicate its most important result. I show, I think, that it is possible to formulate a reasonable conception of the world's unity which shall be sufficient for the practical purposes of the natural and historical

[1] I would, however, invite attention to the account of natural law—of the uniformity of nature—given on pp. 42-46. This account is, I think, original, and enables us to re-state the theoretical argument for miracles in a form that seems conclusive.

sciences and yet shall leave us free to accept the miraculous—to accept it, not as a breach of the world's unity, but as a factor in that unity.

This, however, is but preliminary, for it leaves us face to face with the all-important question : Have miracles actually taken place ?

That question may be very briefly answered in the affirmative, but to set forth completely all the grounds of an affirmative answer would involve a presentation of the entire body of Christian Evidences. The task, did one essay it, were ambitious, and this little volume is not ambitious. Yet something not irrelevant I have tried to do. I have tried to make plain the ground of our belief in that fundamental miracle—the Incarnation.

It is impossible, we are sometimes told, to prove, by historical evidence alone, that an alleged miracle was really miraculous. This contention is probably true, for a miraculous event receives its distinctive character entirely from its cause, and that cause is of such a nature that it lies beyond the range of historical demonstration.[1] But, be that contention true or false, this at least seems clear—our belief in the Christian miracles does not rest entirely upon documentary evidence. Our belief in Our Lord's

[1] The attribution of miraculous character is always an act of interpretation. Miracles are never *obviously* miracles. See pp. 85-86.

miracles, for instance, is not independent of our interpretation of His Person, and that interpretation, in its turn, is not altogether an inference from documents. Had we merely the testimony of Scripture, we could not reasonably believe that once "the Word became flesh." Why, then, do we in fact believe that He who is eternally God did thus condescend?

To this question I have elsewhere[1] given an answer which seems to me most serviceably to prepare the way for the alternative adjustment or re-statement of religious thought already mentioned —for a re-statement closely adjusted to the characteristic tendencies and problems of the modern world, but conservative of those essentials which make the Christian religion a miraculous revelation —and that answer I have repeated and developed in this volume.

What is the ground of our Christian faith? The ground of our faith is in the witnessing and edifying Church—in the living Christian Society and our experience within that Society. Moreover, our faith is a reasonable faith because it is thus grounded.

Now, it is no new thing to exhibit the Christian Church as "the pillar and ground of truth," but in the following pages I have attempted to do more

[1] See *A New Way in Apologetic.*

than that. I have tried to make plain, not only the ground of our faith, but the ground of our faith's reasonableness: I have tried to show what it is that makes our Christian faith a reasonable faith. Our faith is reasonable because it is faith in a certain experience and a certain historical order which together satisfy our moral aspiration and confirm our highest hope. Were this conclusion generally accepted, it would bring Christian apologetic into line with that vigorous pragmatist movement which re-states, in characteristically modern form, the well-known maxim: "Man is the measure of truth."[1]

Certain other points, which seem not undeserving of notice, may be briefly indicated.

(1) Religious faith must always have its ground in the present—in some present experience. Our Christian faith is no exception to this rule. The

[1] If all this be not misleading, the Christian religion, although *objectively* miraculous, is, on its *subjective* side—as an effective power within believing hearts—a form of Humanism. Indeed, every form of religion seems to me to be essentially humanistic, and to illustrate—however obscurely, imperfectly, or aberrantly—the unconquerable idealism of human nature.

See pp. 176–190. See also *A New Way in Apologetic*, pp. 12–17, and *Is the New Theology Christian?* Chap. II.

The account of religion given in the passages referred to—which supplement each other—has, I think, a certain degree of originality. Similar (in certain particulars) to Kant's and Höffding's, it is not identical with either.

revelation wherein we trust came to men in events which are now nearly two thousand years old, but those events are re-presented to us to-day in the missionary work of the Christian Society.

That Society, however, does not merely re-present the evangelical facts : it commends those facts unto us, and fosters the faith wherein we apprehend them in their true nature—as the sufficing revelation of God. In this way that revelation becomes effectual to each age. Therefore, we may rightly say that, in the Christian Society, the Christian revelation is perpetually renewed.

The ground of our faith is in the present experience wherein that renewal takes place, and in the order of history—the line of Christian events—to which that experience belongs.

(2) It is through the constant renewal, in and to believing hearts, of the revelation once for all given to the world that the Church itself perdures.

Like every other society, the Church is—on its human side—a *subsistent organism.*[1] It is not something separate from its Head and members : it is something which those members (together with their Head) constitute, and the distinctive bond of its unity, as a human society, is in the faith which joins its members to their Head.

[1] See *Individualism and the State* and *Patriotism*, Chap. II, "The Nation as a Moral Organism."

(3) It follows, from this conception of the Church, that the Church's missionary vocation is a vocation for us its members, for only in and through us does the Church, as a visible society, subsist.

The Church's primary duty is so to set forth Christ that all men may be drawn unto Him. Because, however, the Church exists not save in its Head and members, that duty is immediately incumbent upon *each one of us*—for we, in union with Our Lord, *are* the Church, and immediately to us pertain the duties of the Society we thus constitute.

(4) The human bond of the Church's distinctive unity is "in the faith which joins its members to their Head." Therefore, we may rightly say that the Church subsists through "personal religion." If the Church, as a living society, be ineffective, it is because we are ourselves ineffective—because our religion is not deep enough, our faith not strong enough, because our membership in the Church is so poor a thing and means so little to us.[1] Did it mean a perpetually renewed consecration of life's highest powers to life's highest ends,—did it mean to each one of us a daily apprehension of God's renewing Love, a daily laying-hold "on eternal life,"—how different the world would soon become!

[1] Cp. *The Reproach of the Gospel*, by the Rev. J. H. F. Peile ("Bampton Lectures").

Certain other points should be noticed before this preface ends.

I. Throughout this volume I have written as a member of the Church of England, addressing his fellow-members. This has enabled me to present my argument in its simplest form—unencumbered by the explanations that would have been recurrently necessary had I taken into account the existence of other Christian communities. My apologetic, however, is an apology for the Christian religion, not merely or especially for the Anglican form of that religion, and I am not without hope that it will be helpful to non-Anglican readers.

The conception of the Christian Society is, indeed, fundamental in my thought, but I know of no reason that should keep "Free Churchmen" from accepting that conception. Christian thought is almost everywhere ceasing to be narrowly individualistic, and, in almost every Christian communion, Christian thinkers are at least beginning to recognize the philanthropic and religious importance of the living Christian Society. The suggestion, characteristic of these pages, that the Christian Society has also an apologetic importance, goes, it is true, beyond that recognition. It seems, however, to imply only a further development of the distinctive "social consciousness" already present in that recognition.

II. Not unmindful of Newman's famous essay,—

An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent—I have described the Christian *credenda* as " probabilities."[1] To-day, many think that description dangerous, and —I do not know, but it may be that some have used it dangerously. In these pages, however, it will (I hope) be found harmless, for it is not here used to indicate a lower grade of credibility. The assents of Christian faith have their ground in a certain kind of experience. When we describe them as probabilities we are defining their logical character, not estimating their trustworthiness.

Those assents are indeed made with many different degrees of conviction. When life is in but slight contact with the sources of Christian belief the conviction that accompanies assent is also slight. In some cases, however, that conviction is an invincible persuasion—a persuasion that the Living Church which evokes our assent is the thing beyond all others worth living for, and, if need be, worth dying for. In those cases the Christian assents appear to satisfy, with reasonable sufficiency, a very high standard of credibility—indeed, the highest standard available for the useful guidance of our practical life.

[1] The Roman Church has officially condemned the assertion that Christian doctrine is a *congeries probabilitatum*. The Christian probabilities, however, constitute, not a *congeries*, but a *complexus*—not a mere mass, but a logically organised system.

In secular experience, it is true, we seem to rise above that standard, for in that experience we seem to have, not only, probabilities, but also demonstrated certainties.

If, however, we take the demonstrations which seem to make those " certainties " unassailable, and then submit them to an analysis of the kind which shows the Christian assents to be probabilities, we shall soon discover that those apparent demonstrations seem to be demonstrations only because the field of thought has been—either unwittingly, or deliberately and for some practical convenience—artificially limited. When the limitations are removed it soon becomes clear that those apparently demonstrated certainties are themselves but probabilities. If it be true that our Christian assents are probabilities, it is also true that our secular assents—those expressed or implied assents which immediately govern our secular commerce with each other and with the world—are likewise probabilities. As Bishop Butler wisely says : " For Us, probability is the very guide of life." All our practical enterprise is a venture of faith : the Church exists to persuade us to faith's loftiest adventure and sufficingly to sustain us therein.

III. (*a*) Because the distinctive Christian *credenda* are apprehended only in and through faith, they are rightly designated " facts for faith." When,

however, we so name them we are not denying that they are facts : we are merely indicating the way in which we make discovery of them.

In present-day controversy we find an important distinction between " facts for faith " and " facts for history." The latter are facts demonstrable by the approved methods of historical research, and they are always *observable* facts. The signing of Magna Carta is a fact of this kind. " Facts for faith," however, cannot be demonstrated by the scientific method, nor are they observable. The Incarnation, for instance, is a " fact for faith." It was not open to observation,[1] nor can it now be scientifically demonstrated. Therefore, it is not a fact *for* history, but it is nevertheless a fact *in* history.[2] It is not less a fact because apprehended only in and through faith.

This distinction between " a fact *for* history " and

[1] See p. 185. See also *A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 23, and *Is the New Theology Christian ?* p. 9.

[2] The word " history " is ambiguous. For instance, " national history " may mean either :

(1) The events that make up a nation's life ; or

(2) The scientifically verified record of those events.

By making a distinction between " fact *in* history " and " fact *for* history," I have attempted to draw attention to this ambiguity.

A fact *in* history is an event—something that has actually happened (1st meaning).

A fact *for* history is an event demonstrated by the scientific method of historical investigation (2nd meaning).

" a fact *in* history seems to be of the very greatest importance. Not all facts *in* history are facts *for* history, because some of them are " facts for faith," but nevertheless they are all *facts*.[1]

(*b*) Unfortunately, " fact for faith " is not free from ambiguity. Certain writers use it, or seem to use it, not to indicate a mode of discovery, but rather to express or conceal an opinion that what they so describe is neither a fact *for* history nor a fact *in* history, but merely an interpretative belief developed by the reflective consciousness of the Christian Society.

" Facts for faith," of this explanatory kind, seem closely to resemble the *Werth-Urtheile*—value-judgments—of the Ritschlian theology, and these (it will be remembered) are not supposed to indicate historical actuality. That which is affirmed in a value-judgment is not supposed to be either a fact *for* history or a fact *in* history, for that judgment is characteristically an estimate of value, *not* a predication of historical reality.

(*c*) It may be, however, that this resemblance is sometimes misleading.

The distinctive judgment of Ritschlian theology is, I have said, a judgment of *value*. Ritschlian

[1] There are those who tell us that the Resurrection is not a fact *of* history. Are they merely denying that it is a fact *for* history, or are they suggesting that it is not a fact *in* history ?

Christology, for instance, asserts that Christ has for us the " religious value " of God : it does *not* assert, and characteristically refrains from asserting, that Christ is *essentially* God. It rightly declares the Nicene definitions of Our Lord's nature to be metaphysical, and it consistently sets them aside, because (according to the Ritschlian philosophy, which is borrowed from Kant) judgment cannot reach to metaphysical essence, but always and of necessity stops short at apparent character and experienced value. In Christology, the Ritschlian judgment can merely express the consciousness of value produced in believing hearts by what is technically called the " impression " (Eindruck) of Christ, and, if it repeat the orthodox affirmation, " Christ is God," it does so with this distinctive meaning : that the attribution of Deity does not define Our Lord's essential or metaphysical nature, but merely expresses His " religious value."

This brings us within sight of another very important distinction.

In some cases a " fact for faith," of the second or explanatory kind, seems to derive its importance entirely from its value as a satisfying explanation of Christian experience—of the content of the Christian consciousness.

In such cases, however, we are left face to face with these all-important questions : Is the

consciousness thus interpreted trustworthy or misleading? Is the propounded interpretation an inevitable one, or have changes in thought and feeling made some other interpretation preferable?

Let us admit, for a moment, that certain "facts for faith" are merely explanatory of the Christian consciousness: the world has changed much since they were first propounded; can we feel certain, in any given case, that the traditional explanation is still credible?[1]

It seems possible, however, that, in other cases, a "fact for faith" derives its value, not merely from its satisfying explanation of the Christian consciousness, but from its definition of reality. For instance, let us admit that the definitions of Chalcedon are explanatory "facts for faith." What is the *explicandum?* Is it merely our "subjective" experience —our inner experience, let us say, of renewing grace —or is it *Christian experience as a whole,* the experience which includes the experience of the first disciples in their personal intercourse with Our Lord? If it be the latter, it will include the Person

[1] For instance, let us grant that Our Lord's Bodily Resurrection is merely an explanatory "fact for faith" of this kind. We may then say that it is a doctrine formulated to account for the Christian experience of Christ's present power. Certain writers, ordinarily called "Liberal," have, however, clearly shown how we can explain that experience without supposing the Bodily Resurrection.

and teaching and earthly life of Our Lord as these were known by those nearest Him. Now, if the *explicandum* be thus widely inclusive, an explanatory " fact for faith " will be explanatory, not merely of the " subjective " experiences of the Christian life, but also of those " objective," those historical, events wherein the Christian revelation first came to men. Let us accept this wide conception of the Christian *explicandum*, and admit that the Christian definitions—for instance, those of Chalcedon—are " facts for faith " explanatory of that *explicandum*. Those definitions will be valuable primarily because they *are* definitions—definitions of the historical reality apprehended in " objective " Christian experience. Their function will be, not to furnish our purely " subjective " experience with an " objective " ground, but rather to interpret the " objective " ground already given in the *explicandum*—to interpret the historical events which constitutes the " objective " part of that *explicandum*. It will be permissible to say that they are explanatory constructions of Christian thought, but their immediate foundation will be, not in the merely " subjective " part of the Christian *explicandum*, but in its " objective " part—in other words, in Christian history. They explain Christian experience, not by inventing for it a pretended historical ground—such as, according to one theory, is the Bodily

Resurrection—but by interpreting the historical ground already given in that experience, and they are valuable, not merely because, in this or that stage of human knowledge and of man's intellectual development, they are psychologically satisfying, but because they are metaphysically true. The " Christ of Chalcedon " will be a " fact for faith," but the " Christ of Chalcedon " and the " Christ of " Galilee " will be truly one Christ—the one Christ whose nature has, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, gradually become more and more completely apprehended by His Church.

A " fact for faith " of *this* kind is a result of the interpreting activity of Christian thought, *not* the declaration of a dogma previously revealed in the deposit " once for all committed to the saints."

Is this way of explaining the gradual development of Catholic doctrine necessarily inconsistent with Catholic loyalty? My present inclination is to answer that question in the negative.

IV. The Modernist controversy seems to be largely a controversy concerning the nature of dogma. In a recent article, written in defence of Modernism,[1] Mr. Henry Corrance has put forth certain conceptions which deserve careful examination. I reproduce his more important statements.

[1] " A Vindication of Modernism " (*Nineteenth Century*, February, 1908).

It is a first principle of the scholastic philosophy that the whole of the Christian faith can be shown to follow necessarily from certain abstract intellectual positions. . . . It follows from this that faith is not faith in God or Christ as such, but in those dogmatic propositions which have been propounded from time to time by the Church or Pope (p. 316).

. . . the permanent element in dogma . . . has been and is the moral and spiritual substratum from which it originated (p. 324).

Dogmas cannot be addressed to the reason alone, or even primarily, since their object is admittedly beyond its comprehension, and exists only for faith, in the supersensuous sphere. This last statement is one which no Catholic, however orthodox, would deny, or wish to deny. The question, then, is reduced to how far they symbolise, and how far they truly represent, the transcendent truths of which they are the symbols. . . . If it be admitted, as it must be, that the words of the creed, "Begotten of the Father," can be no more than a material, human symbol of some divine and absolute truth, who shall say that our knowledge of that truth is increased by that symbol, or that it helps us to form any real conception of it whatever? (p. 324).

Dogma, as we have seen, was primarily, and in its essence, the outgrowth of the mystico-moral sense. Christ's demand for faith was an appeal to the will-power and to trust in His Person. It is, then, to the moral sense that it is primarily directed still (p. 325).

From this it follows that, as dogma does but adumbrate and symbolize the metaphysical aspect of these realities, which are more fully grasped on their moral and practical side, it is a complete perversion of the use of dogma to make it the subject of a series of logical deductions, as do the scholastics, in order to establish dependent and subsidiary theological conclusions. What logical right can there be, *e.g.*, to draw further inferences from those mysterious relations between the Eternal Father and the Eternal Son which are admittedly only adumbrated by a relation purely human? (p. 326).

(*a*) We may admit at once :

(1) That, in its verbal expression, Dogma is sometimes symbolical ;

(2) That, when Dogma is symbolical, inference from the letter of Dogma is not always prudent.

Even symbolical Dogma, however, has meaning. To say the least, it *indicates* truth, even though it does not *define* truth, and there seems to be no reason for thinking that the truth it indicates cannot be made the commencement of valid inference. Indeed, if theological truth be not irrational, theological inference *must* be legitimate, for every rational truth (by its very nature) forms part of a system which inference can explore.

It may be that " Begotten of the Father " is symbolical, but it is not empty rhetoric—if it were it would not be a symbol. Besides its verbal meaning, it has a theological meaning. It is one of the definitions that help to safeguard and express the Church's faith in Our Lord's true Godhead. In the symbol of " begetting " we affirm the *homoousion*. I will not say that the *homoousion* itself is not symbolical, but, if it be, the symbolism is transparent, and can affect our inference only through some corrigible weakness of our understanding.

(*b*) Valid inference from Dogma is possible if Dogma be a statement of " objective " truths which

form part of a rational system. This view of Dogma presupposes that the Divine Nature is a rational nature and the Divine life a rational life. Does Mr. Corrance hold this view of Dogma ?

He tells us that Dogma sets forth, in adumbration and symbol, " the metaphysical aspect " of realities, " which are more fully grasped on their moral and practical side."

Clearly, then, there is an " objectivity " in Dogma, for the " metaphysical aspect " of reality is something " objective "—is an aspect that reality *has*. What are the " realities " thus represented in Dogma ? A Catholic believer would, I suppose, reply : " God, Christ, and the world's redemption." These we apprehend by faith, and it may fairly be said that we thus apprehend them " on their moral and practical side." Their appeal is to our " will-power," to our trust—in other words, it is a pragmatic appeal.

If, then, Dogma be the " metaphysical aspect "of realities thus apprehended, and if those realities be, in their essential nature, rational, valid inference from Dogma is possible.

But does Mr. Corrance hold that Dogma thus represents " objective " realities ?

He tells us that Dogma is " primarily, and in its essence, the outgrowth of the mystico-moral sense " —that " the permanent element in dogma . . . has

been and is the moral and spiritual substratum from which it originates."

What is "the mystico-moral sense"? The context of the term shows, I think, that "the mystico-moral sense" is the faith wherein we apprehend Our Lord. If this be so, then the "permanent element in dogma" will be Christian experience. Does this help us to define Mr. Corrance's conception of Dogma?

Mr. Corrance uses, as we have seen, words which imply the possibility of valid theological inference, but he explicitly and repeatedly denies the possibility of valid theological inference. Therefore, unless his thought be illogical, his conception of Dogma cannot contain anything that would make such inference possible. Therefore, according to him, Dogma cannot[1] possess the "objectivity" that undoubtedly pertains to "the metaphysical aspect" of reality.

What, then, *is* Mr. Corrance's conception of Dogma? The question is of fundamental importance, and yet Mr. Corrance does not enable us to answer it with certainty. Even a critic pre-disposed to sympathy cannot do more than surmise his meaning.

What is Mr. Corrance's conception of Dogma?

Seemingly this: Dogmas are what Feuerbach

[1] "Cannot," because, from Dogma thus "objective," valid theological inference would be possible.

called *Hilfs-begriffe*. They are conceptions that bring Christian experience sufficingly within the grasp of thought—that make it sufficingly intelligible. In their verbal expression they purport to define reality, and, indeed, when they were formulated, they were intended to define reality. Their validity is, however, not the validity of a true definition. *They have no theoretical validity*, but merely a certain value—they constitute a framework as it were, within which the Christian consciousness can helpfully reflect upon its own experience. The reality—the "permanent element"—is in that experience. Dogmas purport, indeed, to define the realities apprehended in that experience. Their definitions, however, have not *truth*—for, had they truth, valid theological inference would be possible—but merely a certain *value*, the value that arises from the degree in which they safeguard certain "moral and practical" elements in Christian experience.[1]

I do not say that Mr. Corrance holds this form of Pragmatism, but it seems probable that he does. If other Modernists be like-minded, the Papal thunders are not without excuse.

[1] It should be noted in passing that the ultimate Christian reality, God Incarnate, is not and cannot be a "content of experience"—in other words, is not and cannot be a *datum* in experience. What, then, according to Mr. Corrance, is He? Is He, also, merely a *Hilfs-begriff*?—merely a conception that usefully safeguards some moral value or practical helpfulness in Christian experience?

Liberal Theology

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I

The present article is written as a contribution to the philosophy of Christian thinking. It is not primarily either historical or theological. It does not attempt either to narrate the growth or to exhibit the doctrinal content of a theological movement. Its first concern is not with events in the history of human thought, but with principles and fundamental conception—not with books, not with men. Its aim is philosophical, and its immediate interest is apologetic. It attempts to set forth the actual conceptions characteristic of Liberal Theology, and then asks concerning them—"What is their philosophical value, and how would they, if adopted, affect the reasoned presentation of our Faith?" Nor does this method seem to us inadequate; for Liberal Theology is dominated by philosophical conceptions, or at least by general conceptions that pertain to philosophy, and ordinarily its theological idiosyncrasies are consequential

upon these. It is a doctrinal movement, but its formative doctrines are philosophical, not directly theological, and many of its adherents would confess to no loftier ambition than to re-state old truths in a new and, as they think, more reasonable way. Even the denials of its more advanced representatives are determined by philosophy or by general conceptions which, whatever their history or theological ground, are certainly not derived from theology. A movement thus philosophical must be judged by philosophy, and met, if need be, by philosophy. Therefore our criticism is primarily philosophic, and incidental to it are certain constructive presentations which seem to us valuable for a right apprehension of the Christian Faith, and for the practical purposes of Christian Apologetic.

But the questions raised by Liberal Theology are not all of them doctrinal. The Creeds are legally normal within the practical system of the Church, the use of them in the public worship of the Church is obligatory, and they safeguard the threshold of Holy Orders. Because thus variously incident upon the minds and consciences of men, they give rise, in minds scrupulous to affirm novelties, to practical questions of grave moment. These questions, or some of them, will have to be considered in connection with any conclusions at which we may arrive.

II

In the first place, what do we mean by Liberal Theology ? Obviously, we mean theology informed by the Liberal spirit. But what is the Liberal spirit in theology ?—how may we recognize it, and what are its aims ?

The very idea of Liberalism carries with it the thought of freedom and of more or less active protest. Liberalism, wherever we find it, is always —unless it be degenerate—a re-creative movement away from a fixed convention and a sterile tradition. Its true antithesis is not Conservatism, but Traditionalism that is *mere* Traditionalism—which sets forth and embodies only the achievements of the past, and not the present dynamic development of life in and through the forms of a continuous history and of a permanent, although changing, society. Such Traditionalism is always sterile, or, if it be in any degree productive, it brings forth only curious subtleties of thought and usage which witness to exhaustion and decadence, not to creative and outreaching strength. Against Traditionalism of this kind—against its tyranny, if it be strong, against its uselessness, if it be feeble—Liberalism, if true to its own formative idea, is always and everywhere a re-creative revolt, informed and impelled by some new development of life which cannot make itself at home within established forms of practice.

As thus defined, then, Liberalism is but another name for healthily progressive Humanism. It is the natural creed of that developing spirit of man which, in its secular endeavour after the more abundant life, is ever shaping for itself new ways of thought and usage to be the instruments and expression of new needs and new ideals. But, if this definition be precise, how are we to define what is ordinarily called Conservatism? Does not this account of Liberalism imply that Conservatism is nothing more than another name for that dead or moribund Traditionalism against which Liberalism characteristically revolts? Yet this identification, if it be intended to mark more than a passing accident in history, is possible only to the fanatical, the unscrupulous and the ignorant—perhaps, indeed, we had never heard of it but for the exigencies and temptations of the baser kind of political rhetoric.

Sometimes, indeed, in this or that field of man's enterprise, Conservatism temporarily appears in this unlovely guise—as the cult of an outworn tradition; but this guise is also a disguise, arising out of morbid accidents of history which are, fortunately, local and transient. Those who to-day—despite a reasonable dislike of party names—prefer, upon the whole, for practical purposes to call themselves Conservative, would, if they essayed to define their creed, use the very same words, save one, that have just been used

to define Liberalism. They would concede to Liberalism the word "natural," and, to set forth the characteristic difference of their creed, would claim for their own use the word "final," not because of completed achievement, but because of a distinctive tendency and an approximating movement. They recognize that Liberalism gives apt expression to reformers' first thoughts; that, moved by these thoughts, the spirit of progressive change spontaneously, and therefore, in some sense, naturally, tends towards it as its distinctive creed. But they claim that second thoughts—the second thoughts of Humanism—are Conservative; that, when, with fuller experience and riper judgment, we re-affirm the Liberal creed, we re-affirm it in a form which, because more complete, is also more nearly final, and clearly entitles it to a new name.[1]

What, then, from this point of view, is the characteristic difference between Conservatism and Liberalism, between the later creed of our reflective thought, and those early affirmations which it transcends? The difference, we think, is this: Liberalism, whether in politics or in theology, is distinctively a plea for liberty, and, as a policy of change, it is determined primarily by the thought of liberty; Conservatism, on the other hand, while

[1] Cp. my Essay on *Patriotism*, Appendix II.

not less mindful of liberty, is, in its constructive reforms, determined primarily by the thought of corporate life and of historic continuity. Because the formative work of history is carried on by a living tradition—a tradition embodied in organized forms of social life, articulate in historical creeds, and manifestly regulative in our governing ideals—Conservatives, in so far as they are true to the fundamental principles of their creed, endeavour in their reforms to establish such a relation between the tradition they guard and the new life which claims recognition that the tradition—it may be, in some degree transformed—becomes healthfully organic to the aims and generously serviceable to the needs of that new life ; and in so far as they succeed in this endeavour they make the new life not merely a transmitter of their tradition but a continuator of it. Their primary interest is to make tradition humanely effective as an expression of human life, and an agent in human progress. Liberals, however, while not always unmindful of tradition, are more characteristically inclined to let the new life find new and independent expression and fashion for itself new and independent instruments. Conservatives, indeed, in their care for tradition, are sometimes too negligent of the changing needs of their changing times, but when this happens it is only a psychological incident, not a logical necessity, and

it illustrates a weakness of human thought, not a philosophical defect in the Conservative creed.

As thus defined, then, Conservatism and Liberalism are contrasted forms of progressive thought, and the characteristic note of Liberalism is its pre-occupation with novelty.

III

After this preliminary inquiry, let us go back to the thought that Liberalism is a form of Humanism. Now, Humanism, if we take it in its most general meaning, is a doctrine, if not of self-realization, at least of self-expression. According to it the aims, the needs, the interests of human life are, or should be, supreme,—to these, usage, thought, and institutions are, or should be, plastic. In so far, then, as the Liberal movement in theology is a form of Humanism, it endeavours to bring Christian doctrine into a relation of vital helpfulness with the characteristic needs and temper of our time. Every such attempt—if we consider only its intention and not its method—must be wholly laudable. Religion exists for the service of man ; even revealed religion is, and is intended to be, ancillary to human life. Our primary end we are told, is to glorify God, but this end *is* our end, not because of some arbitrary decree, irrelevant to our nature and our life, but

because we are so constituted that only in proportion as our lives become God's " highest praise " do we achieve those ends which our nature makes intrinsically valuable to us. God, because He is essentially Love, does not constrain us to any alien end, but appoints for our lives a term wherein His purpose ends in our beatitude. It is true that the Christian religion is a religion of sacrifice, wherein man brings gifts to God. In and through the Church's corporate life our alms and oblations are given, in the first place, not to man but to God. Our praise and thanksgiving are a sacrifice to Him, and as a sacrifice also, " reasonable, holy, and lively," we offer and present to Him our very selves—our souls and bodies—so that thenceforth all that we are and have are not our own but His, and even our daily work has its God-ward purpose. But sacrifice, whatever be its form, is not an end in itself, nor is it appointed by God for His tributary gain. In so far as it is appointed or sanctioned by God, it exists for the sake of man—because only in and through the relation with God established and confirmed by sacrifice can man reach the God-appointed but intrinsic end of his life.

Because religion is thus essentially subordinate to the needs of man and to the ends of his life, its ministry must be persuasively effectual through all the mutations of human affairs, through every

change of human interest and every change of human thought. If at any time and in any place the ministry of religion prove ineffective, then religion itself has failed in its primary function, and this failure will be none the less failure even though unambiguous facts lead us to explain it by the hardness and wilfulness of men's vagrant hearts, rather than by some defect in religion or its ministers. Since, then, no believer—certainly no Christian believer—can rest content with such a failure, although it may be one that implies no condemnation of his religion or its exponents, the aim of Liberal Theology, in its attempt to make the creed and the Christian faith more effectually missionary, is an aim which every member of the " household of faith " must unreservedly commend.

But in what way does Liberal Theology make this attempt ? It accepts as normal the intellectual temper and tendency characteristic of our day, and essays to translate the Christian message into modern speech, and to attune it to modern ears. Now, whenever we essay to commend our Faith to those who have not received its promises, we naturally adapt its message to their idiosyncrasies of temperament and of thought ; for these idiosyncrasies are at least indicative of their characteristic aptitudes and needs. Our Liberal theologians,

however, do more than this. They are themselves indoctrinated with the characteristic thought of our day, friendly to its philosophy, receptive of its methods. Therefore, the spirit of the age is not only regulative of their missionary endeavours, it is normal for their thinking. Because they are thus the children of our changing time, their primary interest, in their own characteristic apologetic, is not missionary but personal. Their defence of the Faith is, in the first place, a defence of their own position within the Catholic order.

Two things may be at once admitted without discussion. The Christian Faith must always make itself intelligible ; it must always commend itself to the minds of men as a reasonable faith—and it must always be prepared to take up into itself—to " baptize into Christ " according to Professor Percy Gardner's striking and felicitous phrase—every achievement of thought and every discovery of science. The Church's *Magnificat* should be eloquent of all the goodness of life ; her " sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving " should be offered for all that makes life generously humane.

Let us look for a moment at these admissions. The first is accepted by men of all parties, and cannot give rise to any relevant controversy. Its words are clear and their meaning unambiguous. They point only to explanation, or, at the very most,

to translation, and re-presentation—not to any change in the content of our Faith. Neither does the second convey any suggestion of such a change. Directly and immediately it points only to incorporation—to the enrichment of Christian thought with the gains of secular history. But to very many these gains seem, in themselves or in their results, to be inconsistent with the Christian tradition—so inconsistent that incorporation is impossible unless the tradition be modified in important particulars. The "modern spirit," we are told, has reached a new point of view, a new interpretation of the world-process, a new estimate of values. This achievement is said to bring us nearer to the truth of things, and we are warned that we cannot reject it without most serious loss, without becoming obscurantist and hostile to the progressive movement of history, and cannot accept it without reconstructing the primary articles of our belief.

IV

One would no more wish to be disrespectful to the *Zeit-Geist* than to the Equator, but it seems necessary to point out that a conception is not authoritative because it is contemporary, or because it is distinctively characteristic of contemporary thought, or even because it is fashionable. The thought of an

age is very largely determined by the practical interests of the age, and by its spiritual character. If men are blind to the higher aspects of life, only feebly responsive to the world's higher influences, chiefly interested in things external and in the practical ends, whether of pleasure or utility, which those things can immediately subserve, it is probable —nay ! inevitable—that their thought, except in so far as it is an inheritance from a better day, will bear the marks of their spiritual limitations, and even their catholic consent will not make it normal for Christian faith. In such a time the Church would be the guardian of a nobler Humanism, and, in the realm of thought, its characteristic mission would be corrective, its primary duty critical. Even in a healthier time it may easily happen that some striking conception, which usefully illuminates some limited field of Nature or of history, is uncritically made universal, and applied far beyond the limits of its first usefulness. Then, again, the missionary vocation of the Church may make Christian thought primarily protestant and corrective. The only authority is that of Truth—of things as they are ; and, although Christian thought ought doubtless to be assimilative, we have neither *a priori* nor historical grounds for saying that it ought to be only and always assimilative. As good Churchmen we confess that " General Councils have erred " ; as

historians we know that the "Spirit of the Age" has often erred.

But what, in fact, are those characteristic achievements of the modern spirit which—sometimes with no slight suggestion of menace—we are so persistently asked to accept? They may, we think, be properly and adequately subsumed under two ideas —the idea of Continuity, and that of Development.

The former of these is best known through the doctrine of the "Uniformity of Nature," and most impressively illustrated by scientific prediction. Through this connection with natural science it has become part of the intellectual furniture of the age, and has for long been in the forefront of apologetic controversy. More recently, however, the idea has been usefully applied in the domain of history, and this new use of it has given rise to some of the most distinctive problems of our present-day apologetic.

We have, then, apparently, three conceptions before us with which, we are told, Christian thought must come to terms:

(*a*) The conception of the Uniformity of Nature.

(*b*) The conception of the Continuity of History.

(*c*) The conception of Development.

Let us take each of these in turn, and inquire whether they are really authoritative against the Christian *credenda*—whether they do, in fact,

warrant or compel a modification of our teaching, and a revision of our characteristic *Welt-Anschauung*.

V

What is meant by the "Uniformity of Nature?" For us, to-day, the question has not ordinarily the same polemical character as it once inevitably had. The "scientific method"—which, by the way, is not Baconian—has been amply verified by results, and it is no longer practically necessary for the scientific inquirer, before commencing his distinctive work, to vindicate the very conception of natural order. The progress of knowledge and of thought had led to a general recognition that Nature is indeed Nature—a dynamic order and not Chaos. By this means Natural Science has won for itself a broad domain, with more or less clearly defined frontiers which even theologians do not as a rule invade, and within which the "scientific method" exercises an *imperium* that may well be called undisputed. Therefore, when we who are accustomed to this rule are asked to explain what we mean by the Uniformity of Nature, the question does not of necessity sound controversial, and we proceed to infer a non-polemical answer from the ordinary usages of Natural Science. Now, as implied in those usages or presupposed by them, the Uniformity of

Nature appears to subsist only in constant relations between facts or groups of facts, and in the quantitative and qualitative correspondence between cause and effect. It is often said that the Uniformity of Nature subsists in the laws of Nature, but this, if taken strictly, implies a theological interpretation which, although substantially correct, is not in fact the proximate ground of scientific practice. Moreover, this account of the Uniformity of Nature is historically connected with a popular, if not a scientific, dualism, which regarded force and matter as not only distinguishable, but separate. According to this view of the physical world, matter is characteristically inert, and material things the vehicles, instruments, or manifestation-centres of independently existing Force. It was then easy to think of Force as obedient to Will, and of its Protean manifestations as resulting from an extrinsic determination analogous to human law-making. But the scientific thought of to-day has transcended this dualism. We now think of matter as essentially energetic. According to this later view, then, the Uniformity of Nature must subsist in the permanent self-identity of physical things, or at least of physical units, and in the unvarying correspondence, already indicated, between cause and effect. There is, however, no need to make separate mention of this correspondence, as though it were a second and

independent ground of subsistence, for all that it contributes to the idea of Uniformity is sufficiently secured by the new conception that physical things have severally an energetic nature which is constitutive of their physical reality. That nature is partly disclosed to us in certain defined or (theoretically) definable capacities for action and reaction. The nature of a given thing *a* is such that in given conditions *b* it acts or reacts in a definite manner which we describe as qualitatively *c*, and as quantitatively *d*. So long as *a* is *a* this capacity for action (or reaction) remains unaltered. Therefore, whenever we find *a* conditioned by *b*, then and there we also find the definite result *cd*—precisely correspondent, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to the conditions *b*. We conclude, therefore, that the Uniformity of Nature subsists in the permanent self-identity of physical things, and only therein.[1]

As thus defined, then, the conception of Uniformity goes beyond the proposition of complete self-identity—A is A—only through the predicate of permanence. But this predicate is an essential presupposition of scientific method. Without this presupposition we could attribute to the particulars

[1] " For the Law of Causality, if analysed far enough, is but the cosmical aspect of the metaphysical Law of Self-identity."—Douglas Macleane, *Reason, Thought, and Language*, p. 522.

of the world only the merely factual existence disclosed in present experience. Indeed, without this supplementary postulate we could not reach either the conception of Nature or the scientific conception of a " thing." Our unit would be the given content of a psychological moment ; the world of physical reality would be only an ever-changing panorama of mere phenomena ; and the " Laws of Nature " would be only a summary of past experience, only a statement of observed co-existences and sequences from which no inference would be possible. In such a world scientific prediction would be impossible, and experiment, though possible, unfruitful. The forecasts of Natural Science are always inferences, and inference is possible only within a world of permanent relations, only from particulars which severally possess a permanent nature. Experiment, too—although it could be curiously made in chaos—can be practically serviceable only within a perduring and systematic order. In a world of mere impermanence—were such a world possible—there could be neither induction nor scientific inquiry.

But the supplementary idea of permanence brings us once more to the verge of polemics. The permanence of the natural order is not a *datum* of immediate experience, nor can we say, if we are careful to speak accurately, that we reach the conception of it by inference from the observed course

of natural " becoming." Our belief in the Uniformity of Nature is, doubtless, confirmed by the success of scientific prediction, but the experimental and logical processes implied by such prediction presuppose uniformity as their postulate. The Uniformity of Nature—the permanence of natural things—is a necessary presupposition of the " scientific method." Now, what precisely do we mean by the permanence of natural things ? We mean that the constitutive nature of things is a perduring nature—that Nature itself, as a systematic order of interrelated things, perdures without change *ab externo*, and that each particular thing continues to be what it is known to be unless and until the natural sequence of physical events brings it into new relations which give it a new empirical character—which induce in it, or have as their correlate, new modes of action or reaction. The Uniformity of Nature does *not* imply that Nature is a self-acting system independent and completely self-sufficing. It is perfectly consistent with the belief that Nature is dependent upon God and follows the determinations of His Will, provided only those determinations be thought of as permanent ; but it is inconsistent with belief in miracles, with the belief that Nature is dependent upon a Will which is occasionally intervening and interrupting.

Is, then, our Christian belief in the miraculous any longer reasonable ?

Let us begin with a definition. We mean by " the miraculous " that which results from what is ordinarily called Divine interposition, from some special determination of God's Will to an end not secured by those determinations of His Will which sustain and direct the ordinary processes of Nature. Some events that are usually called miraculous may be manifestations of a " higher law " not yet discovered by physical research, and others may immediately point only to unsuspected powers in human nature, but with neither of these have we here and now any concern. The question before us relates only to that small group of events which, according to the general belief of Christendom, can be explained only by direct and special operations of the Divine Will. Let us, then, re-formulate the question in the light of this definition. Is it any longer reasonable to believe that the Will of God has sometimes been specially and directly determined to an end not secured by those perduring determinations of His Will which sustain and direct the ordinary processes of Nature ?

As thus re-formulated the question does not seem very formidable. It may, perhaps, be said that it presupposes, without proof and without discussion, the Theistic construction of Reality. It does ; but,

as we have already seen, the doctrine that Nature is dependent upon the Will of God is not in any way inconsistent with the scientific conception of Uniformity, if only we suppose, as some have supposed, the determinations of that Will to be permanent. It is not the time to argue the general question of Theism. According to all the schools of thought which are practically relevant to our modern Apologetics—according even to Professor Hæckel's Scientific Monism—the Nature that we know is dependent upon *something* : in other words, has a non-manifest ground of being, or *ratio essendi*. Christians interpret that ground theistically, and in so doing they no more contradict the " Law of Uniformity " than do those who are content to speak of the Absolute or of Infinite and Eternal Substance. Contradiction arises only when they go on to allege Divine intervention, and the question consequent upon this contradiction cannot be other than this very simple one—" Has the alleged intervention actually occurred ? " Now, no one supposes the Will of God to be a blind activity ; no one supposes it to be other than teleological—*i.e.*, determined by ends, even as our human wills are determined. Therefore, the very first stage in our discussion of the question " Has God intervened ? " naturally leads to a re-statement of the question in the form already given—" Is it any longer reasonable

to believe that the Will of God has sometimes been specially and directly determined to an end not secured by those perduring determinations of His Will which sustain and direct the ordinary processes of Nature ? "

Once more, then, this question does not seem very formidable. We know at least one end which is not secured, or not effectively secured, by that familiar disclosure of Reality given in " the ordinary processes of Nature," and that end is not only of primary importance to us, but is also one that we can reasonably believe to be valuable to God. Nature does not and cannot tell us whether our moral ideals are " objectively " valid. In fact, Nature sometimes seems to write a harsh negation of those ideals ; and yet we continue to believe in them and to make them sovereign in the practical conduct of life. But herein we are only adventurers of faith. We do not know, we can only trust ; and sometimes the adverse comment of Circumstance breaks down our trust, and leaves us hopelessly facing an irresponsive world that hurries heedlessly " down the ringing grooves of change " to ultimate death. Has Nature a moral end ? Are the ends which seem sovereign in our individual lives also ends for that larger order of Reality in which those lives seem integral ?—these are questions of primary importance to us men, nor, if God exist, can we

suppose Him indifferent to them, or to our interest in them. To suppose Him indifferent would, for many of us, be inconsistent with the very bases of our Theism.

We reach our belief in God principally, if not only, by inference or supposition from the essential facts of our spiritual nature and our moral endeavour. Our life is characteristically governed by ideals which—implicitly, at least—are presupposed by all our activity. These ideals are not imposed upon us from without; they have their ground in the capacity and potency of our own nature, and, in so far as they rest upon potency, they are ideals of perfection, and set forth their supporting potency as completely actual. They are regulative of life because they do but disclose the constitutive character of our dynamic and developing nature. As thus regulative they are "subjectively" valid; they claim to be also "objectively" valid, but this further validity is not evident, and we derive it from God, in Whom we believe because of the unique magistracy of those ideals, and Whose creative and sovereign Will has, we believe, "from before the foundation of the world" reconciled in one consummating purpose the orders which we now distinguish as theoretical and practical, natural and ethical. If, then, God be thus the ultimate source of our ideals, and His loving Will the pledge of

their validity, it is impossible to suppose Him indifferent to the primary human interests connected with those ideals, to the needs that arise out of the seeming contrast between the vocation to which they determine us and the natural order within which, if anywhere, that vocation has to be followed.

Therefore, when we, who thus believe, are asked, " Is it reasonable to think that God has intervened ? " we reply, " It were, for us, unreasonable to think that He has not, because the very indications that lead us to affirm His existence lead us to attribute to Him an end which is not otherwise secured, and probably could not otherwise be secured."

The question, " Are our moral ideals ' objectively ' valid ? " is one that is not answered by any of our secular disciplines—by Science, History, or Philosophy. It can be answered only by a sufficient disclosure of the ultimate nature of Reality ; but that nature, as we all know, is not manifest in the world's secular order, and whatever the results we reach by inference or supposition from the facts of that order, these results have no more than an hypothetical validity. Only by some *special* disclosure of Reality can our question be answered. Therefore, if our theistic interpretation of experience be correct, an answer can come only from God, can come only from

some exceptional manifestation of His Nature directly determined to our need. In other words, an answer can come to us only by revelation, and if it come, the answering revelation must be mediated by miracle.[1]

Nor is this conception of an intervening God in any way or in the least degree unworthy of the majesty of the Most High. We are sometimes told that the conception of a miracle-working God is spiritually inferior to that of One who completely accomplishes all His purposes by unvarying law. But suppose it impossible that the ends subserved by miracle could be subserved by law? Then, miracles would not detract from the greatness of God; they would glorify His greatness by illustrating His love. Nor would this supposition be gratuitous. The moral ideal is an ideal of manhood made perfect in and through the life of love. Believing in God, we believe that this ideal comes from Him, and expresses His purpose for our lives. Therefore, manhood in this way made complete is a proximate end of God's purpose in creation. But could this end be attained in a world (were such a world possible) whose obvious processes and course entirely satisfied our every need and met our every aspiration with sufficing opportunity—where no

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, pp. 9, 16, and *Is the New Theology Christian?* pp. 7, 8.

defect of knowledge made room for trust, where no discrepancy between the natural and the spiritual loosened our affection from the things of earth, and quickened our faith to lay hold of an unseen Fatherhood ? It does not seem so. In such a world *Gnosis* would be greater than Charity, and if there were there a State Church it would probably be Epicurean.

It is sometimes said that if once we admit the possibility of miracles we destroy the certainty of scientific prediction. Upon this we need make only very brief comment. Although we certainly believe that miracles are always possible—for God's transcendent power is infinite—we also believe that they have in fact been infrequent. The revelation given in the Incarnate Life was " full, perfect, and sufficient," and we have no *a priori* reason for thinking any supplement necessary. If it be said that miracles occur to-day, we have little or no apologetic interest in the statement.[1]

The " law of uniformity " is, at the best, only probably, not demonstratively, true. It is a postulate which we find practically useful, and we need not to-day trust it less if we are led to believe that some 1900 years ago, for a purpose not likely

[1] Sacramental grace is clearly supernatural, but it does not seem to be miraculous, or to be attended by miracle.

to recur, water was miraculously turned into wine at Cana in Galilee.[1]

VI

For those, then, who believe in God and in the serious reality of man's moral vocation, every antecedent probability is convincingly on the side of miracles. But after all this has been said, and rightly said, the historical question remains, " Have miracles, in fact, occurred ? "

The question is one that the Christian Church cannot ignore, or treat as of only secondary importance. Christianity is more than an ethical teaching and discipline ; it is a revelation of ultimate Reality —not of its substantial essence, but of its essential nature and sovereign character. It is not only

[1] At the highest possible valuation the " law of uniformity " seems to be only a presentation, within the physical categories, of a more fundamental conception, that of the rationality of the world, which is the presupposition of all theory and practice. But, obviously, because the " law of uniformity " is thus provincial, it does not and cannot adequately express the rational nature of a " world " which fills all categories. The " law of uniformity," by itself, enables us to say only that inference is possible. Belief in the miraculous lifts the idea of rationality to a higher place, by giving prominence to the thought of moral purpose. Probably the ultimate expression for the Uniformity of Nature would immediately set forth not a physical rule but a spiritual end—an end from which, did we know enough, we could deduce the rule as ancillary.

preceptual, it is evidential and demonstrative ; and that to which it bears witness, that which it demonstrates, is none other than the character of God—the essential nature of existent Reality. In its immediate incidence upon the hearts of men it is a message of salvation and a doctrine of conduct ; but its salvation is complete, and its doctrine valid, because it is a revelation, because its characteristic content of thought faithfully sets forth the ultimate truth of things, because its characteristic mission and vocation faithfully express the sovereign purpose of the world.

And this would not be if Christianity were nothing but a creation of the human heart and mind. It is what it is, and does what it does, only in virtue of its Divine origin and nature—only in virtue of its miraculous foundation and credentials. It is more than a declaration of truth, it is a certified declaration : and it derives its unique character and potency not solely from the truth it declares, but also from the evangelical credentials which mediate its message, and commend that message to the waiting hearts of men. Our religious trust has its proximate ground not in doctrine but in events that corroborate doctrine—not in the words of our Lord, but in His Nature and His continuous ministry of grace.

Words, even when true, appeal only to human

thought and hope. At the most they disclose a gracious possibility, a possibility fenced off from certainty by everything which makes the world seem other than anthropocentric, by everything that makes philosophy doubtful, and imposes modesty upon our interpretations. Is it indeed true that our human thought can adequately discover, or our human hope attain, the ultimate truth of things? We do not know. Somewhat of practical mastery over the world is certainly ours; but, beyond the region wherein experiment yields verifying results, there is an infinite expanse wherein experiment can never be complete, nor inference be more than hypothetical, and into that infinity our deepest and most characteristic needs daily compel us to adventure.

Were man entirely of the earth, earthy—innocent of speculation, untroubled by ideals, he might find sufficing content in the meat which perisheth, and in the industry whereby he wins that meat. But the spirit of man is not thus easily satisfied. That spirit is characteristically a developing potency, and its yet imperfect powers—actual, but incompletely actual—find expression in ideals of being and doing which seem sovereign, and determine his endeavour and his hope towards a life more perfect, an achievement more complete, than anything which he has yet reached. Are those ideals valid? Is the highest

interest of his life a delusion or a prophetic inspiration? Once more, we do not know. Experience often seems adverse, and at the best can be favourably construed only if we make assumptions which we cannot verify. We use our thought with intrepid earnestness and subtle care; but our thought, as we immediately know it, is a transient incident in a world which our best skill leaves incomprehensible—a world whose empirically-given character suggests a nature radically alien from our own. It may be that Philosophy overcomes this apparent "otherness" of the world; but Philosophy is a human thought, and cannot escape the uncertainty which constantly besets us whenever our thought becomes metaphysical. We *hope* that we are not mistaken, but hope is not knowledge. It illustrates the strength of human aspiration and the native optimism of the human heart. It does not illuminate the world which it prompts us to construe favourably.

Because the world which immediately conditions man's life is patent to observation, his ordinary disposition is to walk by sight and to assign primary value and normal character to the content (or disclosures) of his sensory experience, and, in fact, the knowledge he receives in that experience supplies his primary and most urgent needs. He can maintain himself in the world without becoming consciously metaphysical—without looking beyond the

seemingly immediately given things of his physical environment. But the maintenance thus won was sufficient for only certain of his needs. "Man doth not live by bread alone," and, although the need for "bread" be primary and sometimes absorbing, his nature contains possibilities which are not expressed in that need, nor satisfied by the things that satisfy it. Man's nature is not merely animal; it is distinctly ethical, and the ethical, if allowed free utterance and full opportunity, will always claim sovereignty in the world of created existence, and always use the animal and physical as subordinate and ancillary. How far back in history this transcendent potency became operative we do not know. It was present, undoubtedly, in the first beginnings of history, for it is original in human nature—an underived constituent in man's essential being—and wherever it may be present we can never think of it as quite inactive. It was present even in those far-off days when rude hunters rudely shaped the Eolithic flints, and even then—effective, though inarticulate—it was probably passing from potency into act, preparing needs which no human achievement would be able to satisfy, shaping rude natures towards ends that no boldness of endeavour would attain. In the fulness of time those ends became apparent, those needs urgent, and now, in the world's best life, they are sovereign. To them industry is

slowly becoming subordinate, and politics instrumental. Man's ethical vocation has become articulate, and in following it he is content to hold worthless much that he aforetime prized, and to forego satisfactions which are close at hand for the sake of distant enterprise towards an undiscovered goal. The thought of Right, the ideal of Charity—these, because grounded upon potencies which claim an intrinsic sovereignty, are to-day passing on to an unlimited *imperium*, and history is receiving an explicit determination to ends that no " naturalism " can justify, and that even common-sense often deems imprudent. Over and above all our endeavour after the world's proximate and practical good, hovers the benedictory conception of another good which consists not in *possessing* but in *being*—a good which contradicts many a calculation of the market-place and invites us from many a false opportunity for pleasure,—and to that other and higher good we are content to consecrate ourselves. But is this more than an idiosyncrasy of temperament—a passing incident of evolution, quixotic chivalry to a dream ? Is the sacrifice of immediate gain for the sake of things that " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," the venture of a reasonable faith, or only a visionary extravagance ? [1]

[1] In modern philosophy these questions are at the root of our discussions concerning the relation of the Practical

These questions are not only speculative, they are practical; for, if the imperative of goodness have only a psychological ground, it must take its chance with the secular changes of human temperament, and may at any time be set aside by the dictates of worldly prudence. Only if the good life be reasonable can it be missionary without impertinence; only if it be reasonable can it maintain itself against the world's lower interests and ignobler policies. If Reality be not essentially ethical, then is our faith vain.

Once more, these questions are not only speculative, they are also practical. Indeed, in their appeal to human interest they are primarily practical. They are fundamental, not only for morality and religion, but for every form of human practice which is in any degree impressed by ethical feeling, or influenced by ethical ends. All these presuppose the ultimate righteousness of the world—presuppose that the world-order is not only rational but moral. This presupposition, however, lies beyond the disclosures of secular history and the discoveries of science, and can receive only hypothetical demonstration from philosophy. Now, it is precisely this

to the Speculative Reason, of the Moral to the Natural Order, of pragmatic constructions to ultimate Reality.

Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* Chap. II ("The Nature of Religion"), and *A New Way in Apologetic*, pp. 8-9 and 13.

presupposition that our Christian faith most persuasively confirms. Indeed, we may say that the ultimate philosophical value of Christianity is to be found in that confirmation. God became man to manifest His Fatherhood, and by that manifestation the world's highest faith is vindicated, the world's noblest ideals verified. By "the taking of the Manhood into God" we were taught, once for all—in a manner "full, perfect, and sufficient"—that man is not alien to ultimate Reality; for, while remaining "perfect Man," he can become organic to that Reality and co-efficient with it.[1]

But the Hypostatic Union illuminates the character of God as well as the nature of man. Not without self-abnegation did the Word become flesh. "Being in the form of God," He emptied Himself, and became in all points like as we are, yet without sin. And, in His voluntary humiliation to the conditions of mortal life, He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." We do not know the method of this Incarnation—we cannot surmise in what way "God and Man is one Christ," nor profitably discuss how the cosmic Word can be the historical Christ, how He "in Whom all things consist" can, while still "upholding all things by the word of His power," be personally incarnate; but

[1] "Perfect God and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."

fortunately these subtle questionings of over-curious thought, although not unimportant, are only remotely and tenuously important. For the practical needs of our faith it is sufficient that, because " God so loved the world," man has, in very deed, beheld the glory of the Incarnate, " full of grace and truth."

" Because God so loved the world "—Christianity is the historical exhibition of that love ; not merely a declaration of it, but an actual manifestation of it within the world-process. It is the Divine response to our otherwise unanswered questionings, and the response is sufficient, for what more can we want than to know that God—the ultimate and sovereign Reality—is indeed Love, and not Irony ?[1]

From its ground in an historical revelation, mediated through a miraculous Person, Christianity derives its distinctive and unique character ; in virtue of this ground it does its distinctive and unique work. The purpose of that revelation was to manifest the love of God and to commend that love to human hearts. The fundamental conception in Christian thought is that of the Divine Fatherhood, but it involves radical misunderstanding to suppose that Christianity is founded upon this conception, or that acceptance of this conception is sufficient to constitute Christian discipleship.

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian ?* pp. 8–9, 29–34, and *A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 19.

Christianity has its ground in, and derives its primary *credenda* from, a miraculous order in history.[1] That order manifests, and was intended to manifest, the love of God for a world which could find rest only in His love. The Christian religion is the practical apparatus whereby that manifestation is made effective in the hearts and minds of men. If Christianity be separated from its ground in a miraculous history, it becomes—what ? A pleasant opinion, and a rule of life which, when comfortably minimized, some of us find agreeable. It remains a revelation indeed, but a revelation of man not of God. It sets forth man's perennial aspiration and unconquerable hope, but it leaves the unchanging heavens unrespondent.

(*a*) We call the foundation of our Faith miraculous because the Incarnation, although an event within the historical order, is not part of the natural sequence which constitutes that order. Some—whose conception of order has room only for the commonplace—attempt to overcome the " separateness " which thus exists between the Incarnate Word and His historical environment by means of Neo-Kantian or Hegelian thought. If Neo-Kantian, they start with epistemology—with an analysis of the act of knowing—and boldly carry their thought to the conclusion that the subject of and in each

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian ?* p. 13.

individual experience is a " reproduction " of an Eternal Self-Consciousness. If Hegelian, they employ a dialectic which sets forth all finite existents as partial expressions or aspects of an Absolute which they construe theologically. In one or other of these ways they conclude that every man participates in the Divine Nature ; that God is incarnate in each individual, because the substantial reality of each individual is Divine ; that the Incarnation of the Word does but illustrate a perpetual process and a universal fact. Thus they avoid the thought of intervention. They give prominence to the Divine factors in history, but because those factors are, *ex hypothesi*, essential constituents in *all* history, their presence in the Person of Christ is not unique, and does not burden Christian thought with the conception of the miraculous.

It were easy to criticize this theological adventure philosophically—to shew, for instance, (1) that the Neo-Kantian transition from epistemology to cosmology—at least, as illustrated by Green's advance from the " spiritual principle in knowledge " to the " spiritual principle in Nature "—is an unreasoned transition, an advance *per saltum*, and not by inference ; and (2) that the dialectic which leads us to the conception of the Absolute does not compel us to interpret the relation between the Absolute and finite particulars as a relation between " whole

and part," essence and manifestation, Reality and "appearance." It seems, however, more directly pertinent to point out (*α*) that this new Christology is not the Christology of the Creeds; and (*β*) that, if the Nature of our Lord be so construed as to appear non-miraculous, it cannot possess either the meaning or the religious value which we who stand in other ways of thought believe it to possess.

(*α*) According to the traditional theology of the Church the Person of Christ is unique. "Perfect God and perfect Man," He joins two natures in the sempiternal bands of an incomparable Personality. But neither Neo-Kantian nor Hegelian thought can account for more than one nature in Our Lord, and that a nature essentially similar to our own. The Christ of contemporary idealism can be no more than monophysite, and differs from us only in capacity, not in essence. According to that doctrine we are all "reproductions" of the Supreme Self-Consciousness—forms, parts, manifestations, appearances of the Absolute—and our Lord is nothing more. One essence is common to Him and to us, and His nature is generically identical with our own. *Ex hypothesi*, there was not, in the Incarnation, any assumption of manhood into God, but only the submission of "God"—of the Absolute—to the conditions of human existence: something dangerously like "conversion of the Godhead into flesh";

something also which, according to the philosophical doctrines we are considering, has taken place in every human birth.

Ex hypothesi, the process which constitutes the Person of Christ is the same as that which constitutes human personality. In Christ, as in man, we have Ultimate Reality manifested in the form of human nature, and subject to the conditions of human experience. We may hesitate to call the result Unitarian, but if we do so it is only because Unitarianism, in its older and better known forms, ordinarily assumed an ultimate difference of essence between God and all finite particulars, whereas the new theology of idealism teaches an identity of essence. It permits us to say—if we use philosophy with theological inaccuracy—that Christ is God, but only because it permits us to say the same, in the same sense, of each individual man. But the more modern Unitarianism is Neo-Kantian or Hegelian, and with this the Christology we are considering appears to be identical. We are not concerned, at this point, to discuss the truth of this Christology, but only to point out its departure from traditional standards, and that, be it true or be it false, it is not the Christology of the Fathers and Doctors—not the Christology of the Catholic Church.

This destructive approximation to Unitarianism can be avoided only by saying that the world-process

which reproduces or incarnates Reality in each one of us made Christ more real than we are,—only by saying that in Christ Reality is more completely expressed and more fully embodied than in us. We might thus re-affirm the " separateness " of Christ, and continue to speak of His unique character, though not of His unique personality. He would be more than man, because more completely real, and in this sense He would be unique. But the difference between Him and men would be one of degree, not of kind, and His personality would formally be identical with ours. His and ours alike would be constituted by what Du Prel called " dramatic sunderings of the Absolute,"—by the self-limitation of the Absolute to the conditions of our individual experience. Moreover, He, like us, would be monophysite. His personality would not rest upon or express the hypostatic union of two natures.

A personality even in this way unique would, however, to both Neo-Kantian and Hegelian thought, be an irreducible surd—an incident in the world-process which the dialectic of that process could not explain. That dialectic is essentially a dialectic of orderly, of rational, becoming. Its movement is throughout logical : its every advance is logically conditioned, and its every stage logically consequent. It can neither provide for nor explain the sudden

appearance of a unique personality. Such a personality would be outside the dialectic movement of the world-process. It would arise out of some special determination of the Absolute, and would be as truly miraculous as the Hypostatic Union.

We conclude, therefore, that the Christology of contemporary idealism can avoid the miraculous only by ignoring the unique personality of Our Lord, or by destroying belief in it. Individual theologians who follow this way of thought may, it is true, recognize in Him a certain "separateness" of nature, but that "separateness" is not the "separateness" taught by the Catholic Faith, it cannot be established or explained by the philosophy used to illustrate it, and it re-introduces the very conception which these theologians wish to be rid of—the conception of the miraculous.[1]

(β) Because Our Lord is perfect God and perfect Man, His Person is unique, not only in significance, but also in religious value. Can the new Christology preserve that significance and value unimpaired? We think not. The speculative, the cosmological significance of Our Lord's Person is what it is because of His essential Nature. He, being substantially very God, has assumed Manhood, and this assumption is the theological and historical ground

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* Chap. IV ("The Person and Work of Our Lord").

of Christian optimism—it is our warrant for a certain cosmological theory of the greatest practical importance. This cosmological significance of the Person of Our Lord has its ground, not in His doctrine or in His ethical character, but in His Nature. It results, not from the Sermon on the Mount, but from the Hypostatic Union. If that Union be denied or ignored, then whatever be the residuary or alternative significance of Our Lord's Person, *that* particular significance vanishes.

Suppose Our Lord to be only one among many reproductions of the Eternal Self-Consciousness, one among many individual manifestations of the Absolute—His personality can have no more significance than man's. If we can infer optimism by means of Neo-Kantian or Hegelian pantheism, the inference is as certain from ourselves as from Christ, because, *ex hypothesi*, its ground is not in something uniquely present in Christ, but in the world-process which is constitutive of all individual existents—of this man, A, and that man, B, no less than of Christ.

According to Catholic theology, Our Lord, in virtue of His unique personality, does for man what man cannot do for himself. According to the " theologies of re-statement " the cosmological conceptions illustrated by the Person of Christ have an equally sufficient ground in the nature of each one of us. This, if true, would entail important religious

consequences. Our Lord, in virtue of His unique personality, holds a unique place in the Universe of Existence, and His religious value—as the Way, the Truth, and the Life—because immediately dependent upon that unique nature and position, and upon that alone, is also unique. In virtue of His unique nature and position, He uniquely discloses the nature of Ultimate Reality, and places man in uniquely helpful relations thereto. This constitutes His religious value, and makes His nature and work permanently fundamental to the Christian religion. Because of all this He is the permanent term of Christian faith and our lives are uniquely dependent upon Him. But if it be true that the Person of Christ is not unique, nor of unique cosmological significance—if it be true that human personality, as it exists in each one of us, is similar in constitution, and therefore similar in significance—then the centre of religious interest will inevitably shift. Each man will become sufficient unto himself because of the metaphysical implications of his nature, and Christ will, at the most, have only a provisional work to do in making those implications apparent. The Christian, like the Vedântist, will find the verification of his faith in himself, and would reach it when he could repeat as his own the ultimate expression of Vedântist triumph—"I am That One."[1]

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* p. 166, note.

The Person and work of Our Lord, the ministry and witness of the Church's corporate life—these might continue to possess a certain preliminary and provisional usefulness in preparing men for that ultimate self-confidence, but they would be only pedagogues to bring man to himself, and, when they had done their work effectually, the Gnostic would rise above them into a known or felt, or known and felt, oneness with the Supreme; and in *that* and not in *them* would be the ground of his faith. A religion thus operative would be widely aberrant from the norm of Christian life and faith. It would not be the Christianity wherein we now live; it would, indeed, if Christian at all, be that only temporarily and in a secondary sense.

But can one in fact infer optimism from the idealist conception of human nature? We think not. Green's transition from the "spiritual principle in knowledge" to the "spiritual principle in Nature" is only doubtfully valid, and, were it valid, what reason could we derive from the *Prolegomena to Ethics* for asserting that human ends are cosmic ends —that the ends apparently sovereign for this or that individual "reproduction" of the Eternal Self-Consciousness are ends, and sovereign ends, for that "spiritual principle in Nature" which is other than any or all of its "reproductions"? How could Green show that these ends, as they exist in man,

are not mere "appearance," which indicates primarily only the disabling limitations of endeavour and outlook caused by the self-limitation of the Eternal to the conditions of individual experience? How could he show that the pessimist's renunciation of life is not the true gospel, and that the relapse of the individual into an Ultimate Life untroubled by ideals is not the true *summum bonum?*

As to Hegelianism: can its dialectic prove that our ideals survive the transition from the "temporal" to the "eternal"—that they are more than evolutionary incidents in a life which will one day pass beyond them into an indescribable completeness where will be no place for them, or wherein they will be transformed out of all recognition?

These speculative idealisms would leave the practical idealism of human nature and of man's everyday life precisely what the world's sympathetic common-sense reports it to be—a doubtful aspiration and an uncertain hope; and, if we permit our thought of Christ to be fashioned by the theology which misuses those disciplines, we shall not find in His Nature anything to dispel that doubt or to make that hope sure and certain. As a consequence, we shall no longer be able to find in Him any religious value. That value is given only by a certain instrumental efficiency—by ministry to human needs, and characteristically to those needs which

directly relate man to Ultimate Reality and presuppose, unless they be misleading, an effectual kindliness therein. The Incarnate Word, consubstantial with God and man, has that efficiency, because thus consubstantial; but, if He were God Incarnate only in virtue of a world-process of "reproduction" or manifestation similarly operative in constituting human personality, He could not thus help us. He might, by the psychological effects of His character and life, increase our faith and strengthen our hope, but He would confirm neither. He might quicken or refresh the immanent idealism of our lives, but He would not and could not verify it.[1] Therefore, He would not have religious value, and with this thought we conclude our examination of Neo-Kantian and Hegelian Christianity.[2]

(*b*) We have said that the Christian religion has its ultimate ground in a miraculous history. Therefore, when we affirm the Christian *credenda* we understand ourselves to be declaring the essential particulars of that history. To us the Creeds are historical, not only because they are creations of

[1] It were easy to conceive a philosophy—pragmatist or allied to pragmatism—that would find religious value in this emotional invigoration, but the religious value would be attributable directly to the increased faith and strengthened hope, not to the Person of Christ.

[2] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* Chap IV ("The Person and Work of Our Lord").

history, but because they narrate history—because they set forth events, and make plain the essential character of those events. To us, therefore, the question, " Did these things which you affirm as events actually happen, and, if they happened, did they in fact possess the character you attribute to them ? " is of essential importance.

There are some, however, to whom the Creeds are not, in this full sense, historical. For instance, according to Ritschlian theologians, they are " valuations " rather than narrations. The characteristic judgment of Ritschlian thought is not the judgment of existence or essence—" Christ is God "—but the " judgment of value "—" Christ has for us the religious value of God." According to Ritschl and his successors, the ground of Christian Faith is in a present experience, and the Christian *credenda* express values known and felt in that experience.

Is this transition from past history to present value valid, and, if it be valid, does it make secondary the history we believe to be fundamental, or permit us to " naturalize " it without loss to faith ?

Now, it is undoubtedly true that our individual faith rests upon personal experience ; that Christian faith is the correlate of Christian life—but is that present experience equally the ground of the Christian religion ? We cannot think so. It is true that our faith gives living efficacy to the Christian

credenda, but it does not constitute the objects of Christian faith. It is true, also, that the affirmations of our faith will become sincere, and the presentations of our faith vivid, in proportion as our Christian experience becomes deep and rich; but that experience is a mode of apprehension, and does not create the verities our faith affirms. In Christian experience we are in contact with the Christian order of historical reality, but that experience does not constitute that order. It gives content to our faith, but does not create the objects of our faith. *These* are independently given, and our experience is only a way of approach to them. Ritschlianism illuminates the psychological ground of our religious affirmations, but it can explain the content of those affirmations only by presupposing the Evangelical history. That history is known to us as the background of a valuable and valuating experience, and our faith is the correlate of the value therein known and valued as *given* to that experience, not derived from it or constituted by it. Ritschlianism is, in fact, a valuable contribution to Christian *Erkenntniss-Theorie*. If it seem to be more, it is only because its actual presupposition of the Christian foundations in history—clearly apparent in Ritschl's own work—is allowed to remain merely a tacit supposition.

And presupposition of this kind is necessary if

judgments of value are to have more than psychological significance. If there be no such presupposition, then, instead of the judgment "This thing, A, has this value, B," we can have only the judgment, "This valuable feeling, B, exists," and such a judgment would denote only a psychological incident—it would not be a characterization of non-psychological reality. We can affirm that Christ has for us the religious value of God only if Christ be factually given. He is not so given in the experience which, *ex hypothesi*, declares His value. Therefore, unless He be otherwise given, and that other presentation be presupposed, the Ritschlian value-judgment concerning Him would be impossible. Unless felt worth be the worth of an object A, it cannot help us to characterize A.

And, in fact, Ritschlianism does presuppose its objects. Its values are not merely psychological: they are values of things, and because thus related—and only because thus related—they help us to characterize their principiants. The Ritschlian affirms the Godhead of Christ in virtue of a certain experience of value, but that experience is not a mere feeling. It is, *ex hypothesi*, an experience of the *value of Christ*, and only because it is this can it help to characterize Christ. It would seem, therefore, that Ritschlianism does not enable us to dispense with Christian history, or make that history less important.

Ritschlianism, however, is so complex a movement that it is not easy to say precisely how much a given theologian of the Ritschlian school actually presupposes. Ritschl himself based his thought upon the Synoptic Gospels, but there are in his writings highly significant and interesting passages in which he includes the experience of the Apostolic age and of the Christian society among fundamentals. But it is certain that he did not accept these in any sense that implied an acceptance of Nicene " metaphysics." Indeed, his professed, perhaps his primary, aim was to rid Christian theology of " metaphysics." Profoundly influenced by Kant, although not in permanent and exclusive discipleship to him, he had no place in his system of thought for the miraculous, and no potency in his logic for metempirical characterization. Therefore, when he affirmed the Godhead of Christ, he affirmed, not a metempirical nature, but a certain practical and experienced value. In his hands the judgment of value was not merely a judgment determined by value, but a judgment in terms of value—not in terms of essence. But an experienced value, unless it indicate essence, does not indicate religious worth in the person who is its principiant. If Christ has for us the religious value of God it is only because He is essentially God. But Ritschl's philosophy left essence an unexplored and unexplorable

"thing-in-itself." Therefore his Christ, because not "very God of very God," has not the religious value of God.

We conclude, then, once more, that Christianity cannot be detached from its foundations in a miraculous history without losing its distinctly religious value—without losing its distinctive character as true religion.

(*c*) Ritschlianism, although it has found many Nonconformist sympathizers, has not yet made any considerable impression within the Church of England. Dr. Percy Gardner, however, has propounded a doctrine of religion which, although not Ritschlian, has interesting affinities with Ritschlianism. "A permanent basis for doctrine," he tells us, "can only be found in historic facts, the evidence for which is beyond question, the realities of the permanent life of the spirit." Stated in more general terms, his aim is "to transfer the burden of support of Christian doctrine from history to psychology."

Dr. Gardner, we have said, is not a Ritschlian. His philosophical foundations are in the Kantian phenomenalism of Lipsius. We naturally expect, therefore, that his psychology will be pure psychology, untainted by that presupposition of certain non-psychological facts which is so often found in Ritschlianism. And it is evident that Dr. Gardner intends to fulfil this expectation.

But can psychological facts—if taken in their purely psychological character as facts of the inner life—be translated or developed into Christian theology? We think not. Those facts are theologically neutral. They are common to all forms of religious experience. If they receive a Christian meaning, they receive it, not from their psychological content, but from the non-psychological order of Christian history. Christian experience—the experience of Christian believers within the Christian society—is, undoubtedly, the immediate and psychological ground of Christian belief, and Christian belief, if it be more than theoretical, must always rest upon this ground. But it is not the only ground of Christian belief, nor does it become such a ground in virtue only of its merely psychological content. It becomes a ground of Christian belief only when interpreted in the light of Christian history. The psychological foundations of Christian faith are co-efficient with the non-psychological order of Christian history. Apart from that order, these foundations are not distinctively Christian. Christian faith rests, therefore, not upon experience as purely psychological, but upon *interpreted* experience.[1]

And when we turn to Dr. Gardner's work we find, inconsistently enough with his declared theory, that

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 22.

interpretation is, in fact, present in his "psychological" foundations. According to Dr. Gardner, the "great and essential doctrines which lie at the roots of all soteriologic doctrines are three: First, that man has a natural sense of sin. . . . Second, that the load of sin can only be removed by a change of heart. . . . Third, that no man by his own strivings can bring about this change, but that it is wrought in him, not in defiance of his own will, but by a kind of absorption of it by a higher Power." But what are we to understand by "absorption"? Is it purely and simply a given fact of experience, or is it the interpretation of a fact? If the latter, Dr. Gardner has at the foundation of his thought, not a psychological *fact*, but an inference.

How, according to Dr. Gardner, is this higher Power known to us? The answer is given in *Exploratio Evangelica* (p. 12):

> In the inner world there is also a fundamental contrast, that between the soul and God, between our will and a higher will, between what is and what ought to be. In consciousness we learn to recognize the presence of a Power as much greater than our soul as the forces of the material world are greater than the forces of our bodies. This Power has been spoken of in many ways. In a loyal adhesion to this Power the spiritual life consists. It is the study of our relations with this Power, which makes up our religious knowledge.

We cannot here discuss the very interesting question—"What is the content of religious

consciousness? Our own opinion is that the religious consciousness is never cognitive, except of psychological facts. There is much in religious experience to induce or confirm belief in God, but probably there is never, in that experience, any immediate presentation of Him to the knowing subject as a given fact.

The higher Power which Dr. Gardner finds in religious experience is found by him there because he first of all puts it there by an act of interpretation, and this interpretation is either a venture of Faith, which itself needs to be confirmed, or is the result of lessons learnt from " historical," not from purely " psychological " religion.

We conclude, therefore, yet again, that Christian history is an essential constituent in the foundations of Christian belief.

VII

In an earlier parts of this essay we reached the conclusion " that Christianity cannot be detached from its foundations in a miraculous history without losing its distinctively religious value—without losing its distinctive character as true religion." This brings us face to face with the cardinal question —Have miracles ever happened?

The Church propounds for belief a body of

doctrine which presupposes and recapitulates a miraculous history, and as Christians we accept that presupposition. Why do we do so? Why do we believe that the Word became flesh? that the Incarnation was mediated by the Virgin-Birth? that our Lord's body did not see corruption, but rose from the grave and ascended into the heavenly places? that during Our Lord's life upon earth natural things became wonderfully responsive, in unwonted ways, to the present power of Divine Love?

Professor Huxley—was it not?—once told us that were his dearest friend to report that he had seen a centaur in Pall Mall he would not believe him. Probably none of us would; but why not? Because a centaur in Pall Mall would be irrational—not connected with anything that we know of Nature or reasonably surmise concerning that ultimate Reality which is the principiant of Nature. Remove this "unrelatedness"—show some sufficient reason for the presence of a centaur in Pall Mall—and our incredulity, if not merely stupid, would at least become patient of inquiry, for the report would become probably true.

Now, as we have already seen, the essential Christian miracles have precisely this *a priori* credibility. If Reality be what we reasonably believe it to be, the cardinal Christian miracles, or

others equivalent thereto, *ought* to have taken place. Were they absent from History, it would be necessary at least to revise—we do not say abandon—our general view of the word, the very foundation of our Theism.

Independently of the Christian revelation, we have reason for believing Nature to be the creation of God, and the final cause of the world to be an ethical end. And this makes the central Christian *credenda* to be *a priori* credible. If the purpose of God in creation be to fashion for Himself a catholic family informed and knit together by Love—if His end be that which the potency of human nature makes naturally sovereign for each one of us, it is reasonable to look for marks of that purpose in History. We have, it is true, our ideals, which persuasively invite us to become the best that we can be ; but these ideals are psychological constructs, and illustrate primarily only the potency which makes us what we are. We do not *know* that the goal to which they point is attainable. History has often written comments upon them which seem bitterly adverse, and some thinkers of reputation have told us that they are only by-products of a purposeless order which is indifferent to our aspirations and alien from our hope. Had the heavens remained silent, had no declaration come to us that the ends which seem sovereign are really sovereign—that they interpret

truly the creative principle which sustains the world, and are therefore ontological, and not merely psychological—our very Theism would be but a shadowy postulate, the faint breath of a piety that was only not quite hopeless. But—" thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift ! "—the heavens have not been silent. They have echoed to the tidings of great joy, and under the darkened skies the Cross is even to-day eloquent of a sovereign Love from which nothing can separate us.

But why do we believe that History has been thus evangelical ? We believe this, it will be said, because of the evidence. Yes ; but what is the evidence ? It is frequently said that we cannot reasonably believe miracles to have happened without very much stronger evidence than would suffice to establish the historical reality of an ordinary event. But this preliminary canon we can confidently set aside. It is true only if a given report have no *a priori* credibility, and expresses at the most only a conviction that Nature *is* Nature, and not Chaos—a realm of orderly becoming, and not of arbitrary or chance happening. But, *a priori*, the Christian miracles are credible, not incredible, and they are so far from destroying our thought of the world's reasonable order that they compel us to interpret that order in higher terms—those of ethical purpose—than would ever be suggested by unbroken

uniformity of sequence. They reveal the true character of the world's order, and, by linking the uniformities of natural becoming with a sovereign and unifying purpose they make them what in themselves they certainly are not—a true, although imperfect, expression of the world's organic unity.[1] Therefore, we may rightly be content if the Christian evidences be ordinarily clear and pertinent. For instance, if we have the report of an eye-witness whom we have reason to believe to have been an honest man and no fool, what more do we want?

It must be remembered that miraculous character is always inferred and never patent.[2] St. Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was an inference, not the declaration of an obvious fact.[3] Similarly, we believe the feeding of the five thousand to have been miraculous, but our belief is the result of inference. Even had we been there, we had heard only the words of blessing and seen only the multiplying bread. The Divine side of the event—the Divine operation which made it miraculous—was hidden, not manifest, and we reach it only by an inference which is essentially

[1] Uniformity, in and by itself, is not a principle of unification. It becomes an expression of unity only if and when it is derived from some "Law of Substance" or creative purpose.

[2] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* p. 9.

[3] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 23.

an act of faith. For this inference we may reasonably require generous warrant, but the facts themselves—the miracle on its phenomenal side—can be established, surely, by ordinary evidence. It is said that on a certain day our Lord blessed five barley loaves and two small fishes, and therewith fed five thousand men, besides women and children. It is very wonderful, no doubt, but the facts, when taken one by one, seem very simple, and it is not easy to discover any reason for thinking that their historical reality can be reasonably established only by evidence stronger than would suffice were the facts as reported only commonplace.

This at once suggests the thought, and we deem it an important one, that our acceptance of the Christian miracles—our belief, for instance, that Christ was and is God Incarnate, that He raised the dead and Himself rose from the dead on the third day—cannot be adequately represented as the result of any one chain of inference, but should be set forth as the conclusion of a complex argument in which there are many strands.[1]

Our belief that certain things, which we interpret as miracles, were actual events rests proximately

[1] The accepting act of faith may not unreasonably be called simple, but here we are speaking of its determining antecedents, or, more accurately, of its rational presuppositions.

upon the evangelical narratives. It is sometimes claimed that the canons of reasonable criticism apply to the Holy Scriptures no less than to other books, and the claim is undoubtedly valid. But what are "the canons of reasonable criticism"? The primary canon is a very well-known one: "The irrational cannot be true." And the test and note of rationality is—what? Orderliness or harmony. A thing is rational if it form part of a systematic whole which can be construed by thought. Now, the primary Christian miracles are in this sense rational. They are not crude facts, but they are intelligible facts—parts of a reasonable order, reasonably expected witnesses to the ultimate nature of that order. They are, as we have seen, antecedently credible; when we think of them, not as events but as reported events, we see that, if actual, they are rational.

(*a*) "The irrational cannot be true." This is our warrant for rejecting many a report of the miraculous. We do not say, *a priori*, This narrative is false because it reports a miracle. We reject it—if we do, in fact, reject it—because it reports something irrational. Because that "something" is irrational we are quite certain that the report of it is untrustworthy—that, whatever actual events and psychological processes be behind the narrative, the reported miracle did not occur. And we are certain

of this, not because miracles are incredible—they are not incredible—but because the irrational is incredible.

The primary note of the irrational is "unrelatedness." If we have before us the report of something which we cannot harmonize with what we know of the world—of something which we cannot construe as part of a rational order—we reject that report, and we rightly reject it, because we cannot reasonably believe that the irrational is or ever has been constituent in History.

By this principle, then, we purge the records of secular history, but we leave the cardinal Christian miracles untouched. They are untouched, however, not because they belong to a different order or are exempt from the ordinary canons of criticism. The order of Reality is a monistic order. Our adjectives "secular" and "sacred" do not denote separate orders of becoming, but different aspects of one order. Our primary canon of criticism is universal, and if, when we use it, we reject certain secular narratives and accept certain evangelical narratives, it is simply because the two sets of narratives are seen, when tested by that primary canon, to be essentially different. The former report things that are irrational, and therefore incredible. The latter report things that are rational, and therefore credible.

We are sometimes told that the scientific method of historical inquiry presupposes that if a document report the miraculous, it is thereby known to be not completely trustworthy. It is said that this presupposition rests upon a wide historical induction, and we are asked to show cause why it should not be normal in the interpretation of Holy Scripture. Our reply is that the presupposition is *not* a general canon of criticism, but only a somewhat clumsy empirical rule, which some historians have found useful. It is either a deduction from a false philosophy, or a generalization from a limited diplomatic field—from the field covered by the documents of secular history. It may usefully purge certain records, but we have no warrant for making it general. Even within its original field it has undoubtedly caused more than one report of the miraculous to be improperly rejected. We now see more clearly than our fathers did that the world is not commonplace throughout. We are less stubbornly incredulous of the wonderful, although we do not always find it necessary to regard the wonderful as miraculous. The maxim " Miracles are incredible " is not a scientific maxim ; it does not form part of the critical apparatus of historical science. At the very best it is a rule-of-thumb criterion, which the prudent will often abstain from using, or a crude presentation of that very different maxim, " The irrational is incredible," which is truly

normal for *all* historical inquiry. But this maxim, as we have seen, leaves the cardinal Christian miracles untouched.

(β) "The irrational is incredible." Because *this* is the true canon of criticism we do not reject a narrative as untrustworthy only and simply because it reports a miracle. If we reject such a narrative—as we very often do—we reject it, not because it reports the miraculous, but because it reports the irrational.

A further important consequence also follows: Because the primary canon of criticism is what it is, we cannot say that a "non-miraculous" version of given events, *because "non-miraculous,"* is necessarily more trustworthy than a "miraculous" version, or that a "non-miraculous" text, because "non-miraculous," is more likely to be authentic than an alternative text which reports a miracle. Because a text is seemingly simple it is not, therefore, more nearly original. We could so argue only if we believed miracles to be only and always mythical. Zoology abundantly illustrates the derivation of the seemingly simple from the more complex, and, prior to inquiry, it is always possible that a seemingly simple text is not primitive, but depraved, and depraved otherwise than by the errors of a copyist—for instance, by heretical opinions.

(γ) This, then, is the primary canon of historical

criticism : " The irrational is incredible." Obviously, however, it is what we have called it—a principle of *criticism ;* it does not permit us to infer that the credible is actual. Even religious knowledge comes to us only in and through experience. We systematize our knowledge in various ways and for various purposes, and, if we be philosophers, we endeavour to systematize the whole of it and to form a general theory which, with more or less of vigilant modesty, we accept as normal for thought and practice. But these adventures of thought, even those which are religious, are hypothetical, and do not bring us knowledge. Their results are probable, not certain, and, however complete our constructions seem, we cannot deduce from them the particulars of History.[1] We assume, for instance, that Reality is rational, and we interpret it pragmatically, according to the promptings of our spiritual life. But the rationality of the world *is* an assumption, and pragmatism a venture of faith, which can never become anything else. We do not *know*, and not even the Beatific Vision could make us know, that the purposes of human life are normal for the interpretation of the world—that the moral ideal is the final cause of

[1] We cannot prove the Virgin Birth actual by any demonstration of theological necessity, nor determine with certainty the nature of our Lord's human knowledge by any inference from His substantial Godhead. Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian ?* pp. 25–26.

Nature or constituent therein. We do not even *know* that Nature has a final cause.[1] Our thought is never certainly predictive. *A priori*, its constructions are only probable, and the degree of probability is, in each individual case, indemonstrable. Therefore, a sound judgment is always watchfully attendant upon experience, which it can helpfully construe, but cannot certainly anticipate. Our constructive thought does not make us independent of the world's actuality, but makes our primacy therein credible.

Therefore, however great the value of the Christian *Welt-Anschauung*, our belief in the evangelical miracles must rest, if not ultimately, at least inseparably, upon grounds which are historical.

Our primary canon, then, does not enable us to establish deductively the actual particulars of History. Neither does it disclose any warrant for accepting every report of the miraculous which comes to us with an evangelical context. It is always and everywhere a canon of criticism, and,

[1] This does not mean that doubt is eternally inevitable. "Perfect love casteth out fear," and even here and now the life of faith lifts us above our doubts. It does not and cannot give us knowledge, but it gives assurance—what Cardinal Newman called "certitude." Doubt still remains an intellectual possibility, but the grace of God prevents it, and, although potential, it does not become actual.

if it confirm our faith in this or that evangelical narrative, it does so by revealing in the narrative an essential rationality, and, therefore, an antecedent credibility.

VIII

We have said that a miracle always has a reality which its phenomenal character as an event apparent upon the theatre of History does not exhaust. Besides its manifest character as an event, it has another character which it derives from its relation to the ultimate ground of things. Herein it is like every other event ; for every event has a twofold character, in part patent to observation, and in part occult—accessible, if at all, only by an act of inference which is essentially a venture of faith. Moreover, the true principiant of all events is to be found in the purpose of God. A miracle is a miracle because it discloses an aspect of that purpose not disclosed or not so clearly disclosed by other events. We have said that miracles are caused by special determinations of the Divine Will. But that Will is equally operative, with an equally precise determination, in ordinary events, and is operative therein to the same general end that determines its action in miracle. All events have the same final cause.

A miracle is a miracle not because uniquely determined, but because uniquely declaratory—because it is an operation of the Divine Will which discloses some aspect of the Divine purpose not disclosed or not so clearly disclosed by other operations of that Will.

But our attribution of such a character to a particular event is an act of faith—or, more accurately, of inference that presupposes faith. Of the complex reality which constitutes a miraculous event, only the phenomenal part is perceptible. But that part *is* perceptible, and the observation of it is no more difficult than the observation of anything else phenomenal. Therefore, the historical reality of it may be sufficiently attested by ordinary evidence. The first and nearest ground of our belief in the evangelical miracles is to be found in the evangelical narratives, which report the occurrence of certain unusual events.

It is sometimes said :

(1) That a miracle, were one to occur, would be an isolated event—something unconnected with the ordinary processes of Nature, and inexplicable by the observed uniformities of Nature ;

(2) That our belief in the uniformity of Nature would make the report of such an event incredible.

This conclusion is substantially sound. As we have already seen, an isolated event would be an

irrational event, and the irrational is essentially incredible. But the cardinal Christian wonders are not isolated events. As phenomena they disclose an historical character and illustrate an historical vocation—the character and vocation of Our Lord—and their relation to this character and vocation is not something inferred, but something given, something which forms part of their historical reality. Because of this relation we call these wonders miracles. It follows, therefore, that our answer to the question, "What think ye of these things?" is determined by our answer to another question—"What think ye of Christ?" and if our answer to *this* question be the Catholic answer, everything which makes us Christians is principiant thereto.

We have said that the cardinal evangelical marvels disclose the character and illustrate the vocation of our Lord. The narratives which report the wonders are also biographical, and set forth the Person. They set forth the Person, but their words alone cannot make us know Him. No merely literary exercise can disclose the spiritual secrets of any life-record. He who would truly know another must have not only the observant mind, but a receptive and interpreting heart. And to know Christ—even to know Him "after the flesh," in the reality of His human life—is not easy. To know the content of the Gospel records is not a hard thing: it is quite

another matter to know the Person whom those records disclose. He is so different from us. His charity ignores our worldly wisdom ; His faith outsoars our prudence ; His sincerity shames our contrivings. We belong to the world that now is, busy with its policies, laborious for its tangible rewards. He speaks only of another Kingdom which none but the child-like in heart can enter. And few of us are by nature child-like. Rather are we self-confident, eager for dominion and possession, proud in masterful use of life's visible certainties. Not easily do most of us become child-like. Not until we are bankrupt, not until the instruments fashioned by the world's wisdom for the world's strength are all broken, and disappointment has made trust the only alternative to despair, do some of us make discovery of our better selves within the ruins of our self-will. And until we make this discovery we cannot begin to know the Son of Man.

We cannot begin to know Him, for He can be known only by the like-minded. To those who are of another mind He can, at the most, be only an uncomprehended marvel, the shadowy centre of an unpractical romance—unattractive in proportion to their "otherness." Even if, by some original grace of character or wholesome severity of discipline, we be brought to the beginnings of knowledge, it is no easy thing to make our knowledge complete. We

can enter into the secret of another's life only if our own has, in essential particulars, been similar—kindred in purpose, in experience, in endeavour. And it is not easy to become like unto the Son of Man, and faithfully to "follow the blessed steps of His most holy life." It is no easy thing to share His sorrow for the sins of men, His perfect trust in a Wisdom which the prudence of this world thinks foolish, His magnanimous patience and selfless charity. To spend our lives for others, regardless of worldly gain, to renounce ambition that we may the more effectually serve, to know His constant communion with God and the spirit of His martyrdom, to be baptized with His baptism and to drink of His cup—to achieve this is far from easy; but unless we achieve this we cannot fully know the Son of Man. The thought of Him must become a perpetual peace and an informing light, His words our better conscience, His example a besetting invitation and a transforming strength; we must be built up into His likeness—then, and not until then, shall we truly know Him.

And, when we thus know the Son of Man, the question, comes to us: "What think ye of Him?" "Whom say ye that I am?" When this question was first put, St. Peter gave the answer which immediately became normal, and for nineteen centuries the Catholic Church has repeated that

first confession. But the repetition has been more than a repetition, for in it a constantly renewed experience has become articulate.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." We cannot make these words our own by any processes which are merely intellectual. Only if we have known Christ as the Life-giver can we, with practically effective conviction, affirm His Godhead. Christian belief rests upon Christian experience; in it that experience becomes articulate. It was so in the case of the first disciples; it has ever been so throughout the age-long history of the Church; it is so to-day with all those whose Christianity is more than nominal. It would be misleading to say that Christianity[1] is a life, not a creed, but, undoubtedly, Christianity has its foundations in life—in the personal life of each individual believer. We confess that the Word became flesh, because we have seen the glory of the Lord and felt His power. We have discovered within ourselves not only shortcoming and defect, but also sin. We have discovered, also, a Power which can lift us above our sins into a life perennially made new. And that new life is unmistakably and characteristically a dependent life—dependent upon the Power which first makes it our own. We do not save ourselves. "By grace are

[1] In this connexion "Christianity" denotes "that which makes a man a Christian."

ye saved, through faith." Even when we first awaken to our sinfulness, it is some quickening touch from without that enables us to see, and the new energy which first lifts us above our sins is an energy which we receive, but do not create. The new birth is not a change which we achieve unto, but a change that we experience—wrought in us by a Power that we know to be not our own ; and the consequent new life is not sustained by the native resources of our own hearts, nor by the outward exercises of charity—these might strengthen a power merely psychological—but by faith, wherein we become communicant.[1]

The attempt to separate the moment of conversion or repentance from the rest of the Christian life is entirely mistaken. The change of heart and purpose which we call the new birth is not a miracle once for all. It is only a commencement. We then begin to use the Divine provision for our souls, but every later moment in the new life is in this essential particular like unto the first, for it is a moment wherein we lay hold of the grace of God. The new life is a creation eternally renewed. It commences in the discovery of a saving Power ; it is sustained only by constant communion with that Power. And that communion takes place—how ? Through prayer and meditation, through the self-discipline

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, pp. 24–27.

connoted by fasting, through repentance constantly renewed, through the reverent submission of our hearts to a rule of holiness and our lives to a rule of charity, through open-hearted trust. The grace of God is not a mechanical influx, but a living food—provided, indeed, for all, but received only by hearts that are prepared for it.

And this food comes to us in the fellowship of the Christian Church, wherein we are prepared to receive it. The grace of God is a universal grace, provided for every lawful state of life, ministered through every institution not wholly bad; and, as every institution has its distinctive function, so through every institution comes some distinctive form of grace. Now, the characteristic function of the Christian Church is to make and keep men Christian. The Christian Church is the home of the Christian life, because it nourishes that life, and thereby forms the Christian character. And the more real our fellowship in the Christian society, the more complete our Christian experience, the more largely we become communicant of the grace which is the strength of that life. And out of this experience of a life perennially made new arise the affirmations of Christian faith. Our best life is always a dependent life: we are not self-sufficient. Even after we have intended to make life's better possibilities determinant of life's purpose, those possibilities can

become effectually determinant only by a strength not our own—only by grace received through faith. That grace comes to us in many ways, for the invitation to faith is manifold ; but it comes to us most effectually and in largest measure within the fellowship of the Christian society, which exists primarily to prepare us for it. And this experience of ours is not exceptional. It does but repeat the experience of " a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues." The first disciples found life in the Christ ; in every succeeding generation " holy and humble men of heart " have found life in His Church, and when we also find it there we do but repeat a well-attested discovery. In every Christian century the Christian Church has been the home of the Christian life, opening the blind eyes, healing the broken in heart, confirming the feeble knees, controlling history to ends higher than any disclosed by man's secular purpose, and thereby " making straight in the desert a highway for our God." It is man's age-long and world-wide experience of this —an experience daily repeated and renewed in individual hearts—which is the true ground of the Christian affirmations.[1]

It is as participant in this experience that we most truly know the Son of Man, and, knowing Him

[1] Cp. pp. 217–8.

therein, we discover that which nothing short of the Catholic affirmations can adequately set forth or explain. We affirm the miracle of His Nature not merely as an inference from the text of Holy Scripture, but as an inference from nineteen centuries of History, from an experience which goes back to Galilee and is daily renewed within ourselves.

Some willingness to believe what the Church has always believed we must, indeed, bring with us when we enter the Christian fellowship. The initial creed of discipleship has ordinarily but few articles, and those very vaguely defined. The thought that affirms it is not independently speculative, but is strictly controlled and determined by the spiritual needs which prompt to discipleship. Indeed, those first assents of awaking faith—if one views them in the "high and dry light of the understanding"—seem little more than provisional affirmations, preliminary to a practical experiment in living. But that experiment, if successful, confirms those preliminary assents, and develops them in a reasonable affirmation of the Christian creed. We say "a reasonable affirmation," for the Christian assents are not mystical, nor are they the work of some specially aroused or imparted capacity for faith, which operates independently of reason. In their most complete form they are inferences. We believe the Christian *credenda* because, apart from them,

our experience would not be intelligible, because a denial of them would impoverish our lives by separating us from spiritual helps for which we have no substitutes.

Ultimately, then, the Christian assents are an affirmation of the moral order of the world—of the rationality of the world as disclosed along a particular line, or throughout a particular range, of experience. And this affirmation, like all our primary speculative affirmations, is pragmatist—made because its content is practically valuable. Theological thought, like every other thought which essays to interpret the world, is never disinterested. Its final determinations come from interests that are practical, not speculative.

We have said that the Christian assents are ultimately an affirmation of the moral order of the world. But even this affirmation is not quite ultimate. It presupposes the good will—the will which accepts human ideals as normal for human thought and human life. But if this good will be given—if the primary ethical resolve be made—the Christian assents can be exhibited as a reasonable interpretation of Christian experience. Our belief, then, that Christianity has its foundations in a miraculous history is the result, not of some narrow line of inference from the Christian texts, but of everything that makes us Christian. It is because of our

experience, because of the whole body of Christian experience, that we regard the evangelical marvels as miracles. We cannot certainly deduce the actual particulars of history from any general view of the world—not even from the one which Christian experience makes reasonable—but Christian experience constitutes a reasonable ground for believing that certain recorded particulars were miraculous.

But Christian experience cannot make us independent of historical inquiry. It guides our interpretation of a given *explicandum*—the marvels recorded in the evangelical narratives—but that *explicandum* exists independently of our experience within the Christian fellowship, and its historical value must be ascertained by the ordinary methods of scientific research. But our appeal to science is not a general appeal. We do not ask, " Did these alleged miracles occur ? " but " Are these documents trustworthy as records of phenomenal History ? " We take only the outward and unexplained facts from the science of Diplomatic Criticism ; our interpretation of those facts is independent—not derived from that science, and not subject to its censure.

Now, when our speculative thought receives from the hands of criticism the evangelical marvels which are constituent in its *explicandum*, it does not receive them as isolated events. They are inseparably

connected with the life of Our Lord—with His character and confessed vocation—and also with the subsequent history of Christian experience. They do not come before the tribunal of interpretative thought as unrelated happenings. If we isolate them we are abstracting from the concrete reality of History. Such abstraction may, for certain purposes, be legitimate, and even necessary, but it always leaves some part of reality behind it. It is not as thus impoverished that the evangelical marvels become *data* for philosophy. Even before we interpret them as miracles—while yet we regard them only as "happenings"—we know that they have a context, that they are not isolated. This "relatedness" is part of their historical reality—part of the reality which our speculative thought essays to interpret—and it is thence that we infer to them a miraculous character. And when we make this inference the miracles we then suppose are not isolated. They form part of an order of revelation wherein God, because He is Love, declares Himself to be Love. And this Divine revelation is not an intrusion into the world's order; rather, it is itself part of that order, and makes known the true nature of that order—a nature only imperfectly apparent in the world's natural uniformities. This is the philosophy of History:

Human nature is a potency not yet become

completely actual. That potency, as it exists in each one of us, is the ground of our ideals, which set forth its completeness. Thus our nature is characteristically ethical and teleological. But if our ethical end be a reasonable end, the order of Reality wherein that end has to be wrought out must itself be ethical and teleological. But if Reality be properly thus described, it is purposeful and benevolent. Purposeful benevolence, however, can belong only to a Person. In this way we reach the central conception of Theism. But we reach it by an inference which has large presuppositions, and history sometimes seems bitterly adverse to our adventurous hope. Yet, unless our inference be valid, the best thing that we know—the good life itself—is but vanity, and our better possibilities, which seem sovereign, have no primacy.

But the Creative Love has become articulate in the Christian revelation. Our Lord came to " show us the Father." The central thought in His teaching is that of the Fatherhood of God, and what He taught in words He illustrated by His Person. God became man to confirm our trust in Him. He submitted to the conditions of human experience that by love He might win us to love. And the Love which made the Word incarnate moved the Incarnate Word to gracious helpfulness in works " which none other man " did. Our Lord's miracles

are instrumental to His mission ; they manifest a Power which was the present Power of the Divine Love. And,—that the witness of the Incarnation might be continually renewed " for the healing of the nations,"—Our Lord established His Church, as a society wherein human lives were to be edified in love, in order that human hearts might make discovery of the Divine Fatherhood, and in that discovery find peace, from that discovery draw strength.

Our Lord came to set forth the Fatherhood of God, and the Christian religion exists to make men trust that Fatherhood. It is a spiritual discipline, exercised through a visible society wherein the witness of the Incarnation is made perpetual—a discipline whereby the hearts of men are prepared to receive that witness, and, receiving it, to discover life.

Therefore, when we affirm the Christian miracles we affirm them not as isolated events, but as a particular illustration of the moral order of the world ; and, once more, our affirmation is determined, not by a small body of documentary evidence, but by everything that makes us Christians.

IX

Our belief in the evangelical miracles has its ground in experience, in the general Christian consciousness,

in the life of the Christian society. But that ground is the ground of our interpretation : that which we interpret—the wonders which constitute our *explicandum*—we receive from the Science of History. The Christian consciousness is explanatory, not constitutive. It does not create or posit the evangelical facts ; it interprets them. And its interpretations are existential—not judgments of value, but attributions of an essential nature. Our Christology is metaphysical—stated in terms of essence, not in terms of value. It is true that " experienced value " is the ground of our judgments, but those judgments predicate essence, not value. We say " Christ is God," not " Christ has for us the religious value of God." Theology has its roots in experience—in psychology, as Professor Gardner would say—but constituent in that experience is the Christian representation of evangelical history ; and theology does not merely interpret the psychological content of this or that man's experience—it interprets that experience as a *conditioned* experience, and the most important conditions of that experience are the general Christian experience which it reproduces and the evangelical history which is its inseparable foundation.

Because our belief in miracles has its ground in the Christian society, that belief is really an expression of our faith in that society. We affirm the

miraculous character of the evangelical marvels because of our trust in the witness and work of the Church—because we believe "one Catholick and Apostolick Church." The Christian society grew out of the evangelical history—it is a result of the Incarnate Life, and its distinctive function is to perpetuate the witness of that Life and to make that witness effectual in the lives of men. It discharges this function by edifying its members in love. Its witness is a witness to a history charged with metaphysical meaning; the instruments of its missionary work are ethical. By its characteristic discipline of life and formation of character it prepares us to receive its witness, and, after nineteen centuries, revives in us the faith of those first disciples who veritably looked upon and handled the Word of Life, and to whom the evangelical history was immediately present.[1] For this reason it is rightly called "the pillar and ground of truth," and, although men often mistake the nature of its authority, they rightly attribute authority to it. It truly has authority—not authority which comes to us, *ab externo*, with a crude claim to crude (unmediated) sovereignty, but authority which lives in the heart daily renewed and in the life informed by a new purpose, transformed by a new strength—authority which, because of the work thus

[1] Cp. my *New Way in Apologetic*.

accomplished, constrains us, "with cords of a man, with bands of love," to make the Church's affirmations our own.[1]

And although this authority is primarily an interpretative authority, it becomes us to remember that the society thus authoritative is the keeper of the evangelical records, which, indeed, arose out of its earliest life. The Church is the historical context of Holy Scripture, and our historical inquiries may not ignore that context. If we are constrained to believe that the Church guides us to right interpretation, it will be difficult for us to believe that the *explicandum* which it has preserved for us is, in any important ways, misleading or untrue.[2]

The Church perpetuates the witness of the Incarnate Life, of an historical revelation made "once for all," in a manner "full, perfect, and sufficient." Therefore, it rightly propounds the essentials of that witness in permanent creeds, "which except a man believe faithfully, *salvus esse non poterit.*" "He

[1] This conception of "authority" is a philosophical conception. There are many who discover in the text of Holy Scripture theological warrant for attributing to the Church an authority somewhat differently defined, but with this theological conception we have not at the present moment any concern.

[2] This does not imply that criticism should be controlled by authority, but only that the connection between the Holy Scriptures and the authoritative Christian society is one of the facts with which a complete criticism must deal.

cannot be saved," we say in our English speech, and the words ring harshly, but their harshness is accidental and misleading. "*Salvus esse non poterit,*" for Christ gave a unique assurance—one not discoverable elsewhere, and one for which no substitute can be found. Apart from that assurance we are without hope in the world, or, at the most, have only a tenuous hope, which the world's secular history does not confirm. And we can effectually receive that assurance only if we accept its historical mediation through the Incarnate Life. Therefore, outside the Christian order, apart from the evangelical history, and in separation from the social ministry of grace which revives in us the witness of that history, man "*salvus esse non poterit.*"

It is sometimes said that the Church has wasted its strength in Christological speculations and neglected "the weightier matters of the law." But are not those "weightier matters of the law," weightier only because the order of the world is a moral order, only because of their ontological ground in the character of God? Take the weightiest of all—faith, hope, and charity; these are greatest not because conscience declares them primary, but because God is what He is, and what He is we know only in and through the Person of Christ.

Moreover, if it be the mission of the Church to continue the witness of the Incarnate Life, it must

surely be its primary duty to safeguard for our thought the full reality of that Life ? The primary interest, not only of Christian thought, but also of the Christian life, is a Christological interest. The Person of Christ is our " Impregnable Rock." His religious value is unique because His Person is unique, and that value becomes effectual in our lives only if we rightly apprehend His Person. Therefore the Church did but do its duty when it attempted to set forth the true nature of His Person.

X

Thus far we have been concerned with the doctrine of the uniformity of Nature—with the first of the three conceptions which some would make regulative for Christian thought. Let us now turn to the second of those conceptions—to the conception of the Continuity of History.

What is meant by the continuity of history ? It may mean either or both of two things :

(1) That human history is an uninterrupted process of " natural " becoming—that every historical event is " naturally " caused ;

(2) That history is " all of a piece "—that in every field of history similar psychological factors are similarly active.

1. If we accept the first of these meanings, and

believe the doctrine we thus define, we must believe that the only spiritual factors in history are those which have their ground in human nature ; we must deny that God exists, or believe Him to be as idle as the gods of Epicurus ; we must reject not only every thought of revelation, but also every thought of Divine influence upon the heart and mind of man—all that Mr. Balfour denotes by the word " inspiration."

But as thus defined the doctrine of continuity pertains to philosophy rather than to history. It implies a conception of the world which cannot be derived from history, and an interpretation of the world which cannot be proven by history. Its foundations are elsewhere than in the science of history, and it is not presupposed by the methods of that science. It is essentially speculative, and on speculative grounds we reject it. We cannot *prove* that the course of history is influenced by God, but we believe that it is, and we have good reasons for our belief. Had we not, it would be necessary to re-examine the very foundations of our Theism. If the doctrine of continuity be inconsistent with the belief that God has, everywhere and in all ages, touched the hearts and minds of men, quickening men to thoughts and deeds which without Him had not been—if it be inconsistent with this belief, we decisively and finally reject it. But in rejecting it

we shall not reject anything important for the science of history, because the conception as defined by the meaning we reject is not a principle of that science or an instrument of its method.

2. It is only as defined by the second of our two suggested meanings that the conception is actually instrumental to scientific method. The scientific historian does undoubtedly presuppose (as a working hypothesis, not as a speculative doctrine) " that history is ' all of a piece '—that in every field of history similar psychological factors are similarly active ; " and with this presupposition we have no quarrel. It does not touch " origin," but only " mode of operation." It tells us nothing more startling than this—that history is not *cloisonné*, that human nature is everywhere the same, and, as disclosed within the historical period, has certain characteristics which may not unreasonably be called permanent, although they are undoubtedly variable.

From this the Christian apologist of to-day will rarely be tempted to dissent. Why, then, do men regard the conception as so important ? Because of the distinction at one time made between sacred and profane history ; not because a distinction was, in fact, made, but because of the nature of the distinction made. Theologians did not always recognize that the Divine influence upon history—through the consciences and minds of men—is a

universal influence, and, whatever the provinces of history within which they believed it to be actual, they believed that it therein determined human nature to unique modes of operation. They had not a clear conception of human personality, of the essential truth that man is normally self-determined and acts according to his nature. They thought of the Divine influence upon man as though it were the putting of a Divine "something" into man, a "something" which would always act in ways manifestly Divine, receiving no limitation, suffering no detraction, from the nature wherein it acts. We now think differently. We believe the Divine influence upon man to be ordinarily, not an intrusion into human nature and a supersession of its characteristics, but a quickening of that nature. We believe man's *action* under that influence to be a *reaction* to it, and that reaction to be always according to the characteristic laws and powers of human nature. No injustice will be done to either conception if, intending only to indicate characteristic tendencies, we call the one "mechanical" and the other "psychological."

These different conceptions of the Divine action are associated with different conceptions of history. The former makes history discontinuous; for, according to it, men who are moved by God move, not according to their own natures, but according

to His—according to the unmodified Divine impulse. Within the field of the Divine operation men act otherwise than they ordinarily do—they are determined *ab extra*, and are instruments rather than personal agents. Inspiration is verbal, and prophecy a real foretelling of the future. Because of all this, sacred history is a thing apart; not an aspect of the world's general history, but a separate province of history, distinguished by unique activities, and within that province the characteristic note of the Divine action is an unqualified inerrancy. On the other hand, the psychological conception naturally leads us to think of history as continuous. Human history is the history of human action, and, according to the psychological conception, it is a continuous history because man—however various the stimuli which move him to action—always acts and reacts according to the laws and constitution of his own nature.

"According to the laws and constitution of his own nature," but not always as that nature would prompt if unaided. We believe that God has always been active in the world's history; we are slow to think that His action is ever ineffectual, we cannot think that it is ever purposeless. What, then, is the purpose of God? what the final cause of His creation? We believe that His purpose is an ethical purpose, a purpose to be accomplished in human

hearts and lives ; we believe that the end constituted by that purpose is the final cause of His creation and of His sustaining Providence. These beliefs are essential in our Theism, which has its ground in our ideals and the unaccomplished purpose which they indicate. But if the purpose of God be ethical, the marks of His action will also be ethical. His action may variously quicken men, making of one a prophet, of another an evangelist, of another a discoverer of spirits, of another an interpreter of tongues—" dividing to every man severally as He will "—but in every case the gift of God has an ethical mission.

Pride may not recognize the gift, and may think the new power its own ; but the " honest and good heart " always recognizes the visitation of God, and uses His gift reverently, always with a *Non nobis Domine*, because " it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The heart thus visited knows immediately that the strength of its new work is not its own, but we—who see but the resultant work, not the originating gift—can only infer the presence of a Divine co-efficient. And we infer it—whence ? Not from spoken word, not from this or that particular act, but from ethical tendency.

This mode of inference seems the more reasonable because it connects the Divine gift with the sovereign

Divine purpose. If that purpose be ethical—as we believe it to be—then the characteristic notes of action instrumental thereto will also be ethical. If God's purpose in history be ethical, then His action in history will also be ethical. However various the response of men to the influence of God, however various the gifts whereby He quickens men to become co-operant with Him, the characteristic note of His presence in history will be ethical. His action is determined by His purpose, and that purpose is—what ? A purpose to build that Holy City, the New Jerusalem, whereof the stones are living—a purpose to fashion for Himself a new humanity, wherein life, made perfect in Love, will be for ever His highest praise. Whatever the new forms of life and thought to which He quickens man, and whatever the relativity with which the recipient nature of man expresses and interprets the purposeful influence which quickens it, the Divine acton, in proportion as it is effectual, always has one characteristic result. It strengthens the upward tendencies of history, and helps man upward, above " the dark edges of the sensual ground," towards his appointed end. And from results of this kind we infer the presence of God.

Nor can it be said that this inference from ethical tendency is insufficient to satisfy our religious needs. It conveys precisely the assurance which we seek—that, and no other—for it gives reasonable ground

for believing that God is operant in history for an end that includes our own end. In virtue of this inference the dynamic order which constitutes the world's unity is revealed in history as a moral order, as the working out of an ethical purpose concurrent with our own.

What more do we want? Certainty?—the certainty of obvious fact? But if this were granted we would walk by sight, not by faith, and the dependence which becomes perfect in love would not be the characteristic norm of our lives. As Bishop Butler most truly says, "To Us probability is the very guide of life." We could, undoubtedly, infer similar assurance from a dictated text or from veridical prediction, but the inference would be more complex, less certain, and would have no greater religious value.

It should be clearly understood that no religious advantage whatever results from the older conception of the Divine action in history—from the conception which we have called "mechanical." For instance, if the Holy Scriptures convince us that God is effectually operant in the world towards an end in which our own characteristic end is integral, we gain nothing of religious value by supposing them to be inerrant—by supposing inspiration to be verbal and prophecy a real prediction.[1]

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* pp. 23–24.

XI

As we have already seen, the principle of the continuity of history means this—that, in every field of human activity, man acts and reacts according to the essential laws and powers of his own nature. If, then, this principle be true, man's religious history cannot be a thing apart—or, more accurately, cannot be a thing *entirely* apart, quite dissimilar from the history of his secular endeavour and experience, nor can Christian history be quite dissimilar from other religious history. Although divine factors which are not elsewhere present make Christian history unique, we shall, if we believe the principle of continuity to be true, expect that it will be marked by phenomena similar to those which characterize the history of other religions—that there will be, in fact, a certain community of character between Christian and non-Christian history. Whatever the extent of this community, to that extent Christian history will fall into line with the histories of other religions, and may properly be regarded as part of the general religious history of the race.

This community of character, however, will subsist only in certain groups of phenomena which illustrate the universal presence of certain psychological laws and agencies, and will warrant no inference more important than this—that in all religious

history human nature is similarly active. This inference is the ground—or, at least, an important part of the ground—upon which modern thought attempts to construct a science of Comparative Religions.

It would be beside our present purpose to enter upon any detailed examination of this attempt. We need only emphasize one necessary warning. Because the psychological agencies in Christian history are generically identical with those creative in other religious histories, Christianity falls into line, to some extent, with other religions. But it does not thereby become co-ordinate with them, or cease to be unique. The common character which results from the constructive activity of common psychical agencies is a phenomenal character—*only* a phenomenal character. Whatever be the case with other religions, in Christianity this phenomenal character is of only secondary importance. *Our* faith, if no other, has its foundation, not in the imaginative heart and speculative mind of man, but in the efficacious will of God. *Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis.* In the temporal superstructure of the *Civitas Dei* are many things of human origin, but the foundations of the city are divine. Christianity is what it is, not because ethnic practices and beliefs have been "baptized into Christ"—not because the creative spirit of man has, within the

Christian fellowship, enshrined its hope and thought in forms like unto those which it has elsewhere made instrumental to its faith ; but because " the Word became flesh " and, as thus incarnate, is, from age to age, the living centre of a new allegiance, the imperishable ground of a new trust. Because Christianity is founded upon this Divine Act, it is unique among the religions of the world—not *primus inter pares*, but something of a different kind. It is in certain ways similar to other faiths, because it ministers to the same universal needs and appeals to the same primary potency of human nature, and because, also, its history is marked by kindred beliefs and practices. But the similarity thus constituted is only functional and phenomenal—sufficient to make a science of Comparative Religions possible, not sufficient to co-ordinate Christianity with other faiths.

The Christian religion is essentially divine, for it is founded upon the Incarnation, and is maintained, as we believe, by the perpetual operation of the Holy Spirit. But the religion thus founded has become part of human history, and the divine activities which constantly renew its youth are operative within the hearts and minds of men who, in the essential constitution of their several natures, are in no important way different from their fellows. Because the Love which sustains the Church is

rational, and because the ends which that Love seeks can be realized only in and by *persons*—in and by the edification of personal lives into " the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ "—it seems reasonable to expect that the operations of that Love will not supersede the characteristic activities of human nature, but will leave that nature free to respond to the visitation of God according to the characteristic laws of its own personal life. A nature that is essentially personal cannot be " saved " by destroying its personality ; nor can we think that God would seek to realize an ideal which is a catholic ideal for *persons* by using persons as mere instruments.

The question is sometimes asked—Do we know enough concerning the purpose of God to use that purpose constructively ? It is undoubtedly true that the essence of God is inscrutable ; true, also, that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and His ways higher than our ways. We worship " the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible," but we must be careful not to exaggerate or misinterpret the " immensity " before which we bow. The substantial essence of the Divine Life is unknown, and cannot be explored by the human reason or pictured by the human imagination. God, we say, is *causa sui*, but the phrase is really a negation, and does

little more than cover an incompetence of thought. We cannot form any clear conception of Self-existent Being, or of a nature which, because it is the ground of Time and Space, is unconditioned by Time and Space.

Although, however, the *nature* of God is inscrutable, His *character* is not unintelligible. The world is not the accidental result of random Power. It is the purposed creation of Thought, the ordered resultant of a rational will; and the Christian revelation declares that Rational Will to be Righteous Love. Now, Rationality, Righteousness, and Love are not unintelligible. The Divine Essence is incomprehensible, but we know what Love is, and we can understand its workings. The revelation that declares God to be Love declares also that, in so far as He is Love, His character is intelligible. As with Love, so with Thought. It were merely playing with words to attribute a rational nature to God, if we believed His nature to be unintelligible; for an unintelligible nature cannot be rational. Nor can we find relief by saying that God is hyper-rational, for the hyper-rational, no less than the irrational, is unintelligible—something other than the rational. In this connection ὑπὲρ means "not." Undoubtedly the attributes of God are perfect, whereas the homologous attributes of man are imperfect; but, perfect or imperfect, Love is always

Love and Reason always Reason. Neither Love nor Reason change their nature and pass into something else when they become complete. The intellectual and moral attributes of God, then, do not share in the "immensity" of the Divine Essence. Did they do so, His immensity would be no less oppressive than those physical magnitudes which sometimes seem overwhelming. We can derive no support against the immensity of Nature from a similar Divine immensity. "God is our refuge" because His character, being what revelation declares it to be, is an intelligible character.

Because the character of God is thus intelligible, we may properly infer His method from His purpose. If that purpose be—as we believe it to be—one which can be realized only in and by persons, we cannot suppose that the ministry of grace which is ancillary to that purpose will override the personality of man, and use man as a mere vehicle or instrument. We conclude, therefore, that even within the field of the divine operations, and when subject to the visitation of God, man will still act and react, not as though he were an impersonal tool, but according to the characteristic laws and powers of his nature, which is essentially a personal nature.

If this conclusion be correct, we shall expect to find that, along the line of Christian history, the human spirit has been constructive of beliefs and

practices similar to those which mark other lines of religious tradition. And this expectation, if entertained, would not be misleading. Outside Christendom the creative spirit of man has been variously constructive of belief and observance. Within Christendom that same spirit—quickened, and not suppressed, by divine influence—has been similarly constructive. There is, as a consequence, a wide range of phenomenal resemblance between Christian and non-Christian history. In both, for instance, we find myths and legends that purport to be and are not veridical, miracles that were not miracles, pretended prophecies in which there was nothing divine.

That the secular tradition of the Christian Faith has been marked by secondary constructions of this kind is one of the plainest facts of ecclesiastical history. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," and the vessels are not mere vessels, but have activities of their own which are not suppressed nor completely controlled by the divine influx.

XII

Probably no one would protest against a recognition of these secondary constructions in the history which is ordinarily called ecclesiastical; but many are reluctant to admit that such constructions exist in

those early documentary sources which Christians of every denomination regard as primary. The Bible, they think, is a thing apart—a divine gift, not a human work—a Sacred Book, it is true, but one unlike other Sacred Books, a Book comparable only as a contrast.

This reluctance is intelligible in those who believe that God has purposed to accomplish the salvation of men by means of the written Word ; who think that " the Bible and the Bible only " is the true religion for all Christian men ; but those of us who are not constrained by this mistake need not share the consequent hesitation.

The primary instrument of salvation is not a book but the Christian Society—the Catholic Church, with its secular tradition of revealed truth and mediating ministry of grace. The practical basis of our faith is not diplomatic but experimental. We are Catholic Christians because of an experience which has its ground and explanation in the fellowship and testimony of the Catholic Church. Therefore we are under no constraint towards Bibliolatry. We receive the Christian Scriptures as witnesses to the Church's earliest and formative faith and to the divine facts which are essential in Christian history. The older Scriptures we receive as witnessing to an earlier discipline and revelation whereby the way was in fact prepared for the " full, perfect, and sufficient " revelation made " once for all " by the

Incarnation of the Word, and for the evangelical mission of the Church.[1] We have, however, no reason for supposing those Scriptures to be *wholly* divine—completely free from those human constructions we have called secondary. Whether they do, in fact, contain such constructions is a literary and historical question which can be finally answered only by a sufficiently informed and sufficiently equipped criticism.

It must be made perfectly clear that we have no quarrel with Criticism *as such*. We may reasonably think that its actual methods are sometimes inadequate, we may reasonably reject some of its conclusions, but we may not be merely antagonistic, nor may we seek to shelter ourselves behind theological authority: indeed, no sufficient authority of that kind exists. If we are called upon to be combatants, we must meet Criticism upon its own ground, and must establish our case by superior science—by more adequate learning and by a better method. Certainly—most certainly—we may not for one moment ally ourselves with such an apologist as Dr. Emil Reich.

XIII

The third conception which Christian theology is invited to accept as regulative is the conception of

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* pp. 23-24.

development. The world, we are told, is not static but dynamic, and the world-process is continuous, so that all " facts " are " events," and all " events " are generated.[1]

(*a*) The idea of development has become most widely familiar through the biological doctrine of Evolution. Many years ago, when Darwin's work was still novel, the foremost bishop of the day fulminated against it, and since that time the thunders, although diminishing, have been continuous.

Now, the theory of biological development may be held in one or other of three forms :

1. As a doctrine which attributes to infra-human forms of life a natural genesis from earlier forms.

2. As a doctrine which extends this attribution to the human body.

3. As a doctrine which derives man himself, in the full actuality of his nature, from non-human forms of life.

We say at once that, in so far as this doctrine is a doctrine of genetic connection, no theological objection can be sustained against it. Even if it were true that human nature is the result of some natural process of " becoming," no part of the

[1] " Generated," because the doctrine of development, as ordinarily stated, implies that one thing (or event) comes out of another. " Generation " is narrower than " causation," because the latter does not always and necessarily imply genesis in a natural order of " becoming."

Catholic Faith would be endangered. At the very most this discovery would compel us to revise only certain opinions which, although widely received, are not now universal, are not necessary, are not authoritative.

With biology, pure and simple, Christian theology has no immediate concern. For theologians the question " How have existent animal forms come into being ? " is little more than curious. On the other hand, if we take anthropology in its widest meaning—as an endeavour towards a complete doctrine of human nature—then, undoubtedly, in that branch of inquiry theology has an interest which is direct and important. Christianity presupposes that human nature is essentially spiritual. Therefore, Christian theology cannot be indifferent to the secular inquiries of anthropology.[1] Its interest, however, is strictly limited. It is not concerned to deny that human nature is derivative, provided only that whatever derivation is suggested be consistent with the essential integrity of its own doctrine concerning man. It is a sufficient preliminary to Christian theology if man be shown to

[1] In England, anthropology is ordinarily regarded as a natural science, and inquiries into the ultimate constitution of human nature are held to pertain to philosophy, not to anthropology. Some Continental writers, however, subsume Philosophy under Anthropology. C. A. S. Rappoport, *Primer of Philosophy*.

possess a spiritual nature which is dependent upon God, and this can be shown by an adequate philosophy. If that nature be proven derivative it is none the less spiritual. The proof, if given, might compel us to revise our Animal Psychology, but would not affect the essentials of Theology.

We do not for a moment suggest that this proof can be given. It seems impossible to analyze apperception into elements that are not apperceptive. Even the simplest forms of human experience and judgment presuppose a spiritual nature which cannot reasonably be derived from anything non-spiritual. If, then, we believe human nature to be derivative, we must believe also, at least, that every form of life ancestral to man possessed an apperceptive *psyche* capable of developing into the human spirit. That belief is not, *a priori*, an impossible one, but it is unverifiable, and would necessitate an extraordinary revision of biology. But even if, *per impossibile*, verification were forthcoming, the *theological* interest of it would be unimportant. Man is what he is, and not what his animal progenitors—if, indeed, he have such progenitors—at one time temporarily were; and if the present nature of man be spiritual, *that* is a sufficient basis for Christian doctrine.

Ordinarily, however, the advocates of derivation do not carry back the conception of spirit into the animal series. Their "animal psychology" is

psychology without a *psyche*, and their suggested derivation of human nature would, if accepted, degrade human psychology to the same level; for that derivation purports to show the development of man's characteristic life out of non-spiritual antecedents. The suggested development is not a development of *spirit*, but only of psychological facts—of the simpler into the more complex. These facts are said to be functions of animal life. Nowhere—neither in man himself nor at any stage of his supposed phylogeny—does spiritual substance or agency appear. This theory is definitely anti-Christian. It cannot be verified by science, and it can be finally refuted by philosophy.

(*b*) The doctrine of organic development is sometimes presented to us as part of a general evolutionary theory of the universe. Professor Haeckel, for instance, makes it integral in a monistic cosmology which he mistakenly believes to be Spinozistic. The doctrine of the world's substantial unity is not an inference from observed facts. It is, indeed, philosophical rather than scientific, and it existed long before natural science had achieved those progressive integrations which in our own day have made men think the doctrine probable. These integrations are, however, even now, far from complete, and, if we start from them, it is only *per saltum* that we can reach a Monism like Professor Haeckel's—only by

an effort of the constructive imagination generically identical with the efforts which have given us unifications avowedly metaphysical.[1]

Because, then, the ultimate ground of even Professor Haeckel's Monism is to be found in man's speculative nature, and not in his science, it is quite easy to attach too much importance to the gaps which confessedly still exist between the several departments of man's natural knowledge. These gaps are generally recognized, but they are transcended by the Monistic movement of thought, a movement which, although it undoubtedly derives strength from the integrations of science, is essentially independent of those integrations.

The primary criticism of Professor Haeckel, and of those who think like him, must be philosophical, not scientific. In particular, it would be unwise to build upon "vitalism"—upon the doctrine that life is *sui generis*—not derived from physical activities. We may rightly insist that the personal experience and purposive life of man cannot be derived from such activities, but the spiritual life of man is one thing, and the physiological life which he shares with animals and plants is quite another. Theology rightly contends that the former is *substantially* distinct from things "natural"; but it

[1] See *A Scientific Monism*, by Arthur Boutwood. ("Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society," 1901-02.)

has no interest in maintaining a like distinctness for the latter. And Professor Haeckel, it must be remembered, does not in so many words attempt to derive the spiritual from the non-spiritual. His doctrine of Substance is not formally materialistic, for he attributes to his primitive substance a psychical nature,[1] and it is from *this* nature, and not from something non-psychical, that he derives the psychical life of man.

If the scientific integration of man's natural knowledge were complete, it would not prove either Materialism or Professor Haeckel's Pan-psychism to be true ; its admitted incompleteness does not prove either untrue. We may not attempt to build Christian theology upon the *lacunæ*—which may be only temporary—in our scientific knowledge. Nor can we infer from these *lacunæ* anything conclusive against Professor Haeckel's Monism.

Yet it is quite clear that the Jena Professor's philosophy—a "philosophy falsely so called"—is, as he somewhat vulgarly contends, essentially anti-Christian. What, then, should be the line of attack? Hostilities may, we think, be most usefully opened by showing :

1. That the personal, the apperceptive and

[1] Because of this attribution he calls his doctrine of Substance Spinozistic ; but, at the very best, his creed is only a depraved Spinozism.

purposeful, life of man, cannot be derived from the impersonal, non-apperceptive and non-purposive *psyche* of Professor Haeckel's Substance.

2. That, even if we could reasonably believe that Substance to be the ground of all particulars, the unity of those particulars cannot be derived from extended Substance—and Professor Haeckel's Substance appears to be extended—but can be constituted only by an informing and controlling *purpose*, by the intending will of a spiritual existent.

We have already suggested that the uniformity of Nature can be completely set forth only in terms of purpose—not in those of physical becoming. We now suggest that the *unity* of Nature cannot be adequately presented otherwise. Our Monism must be a spiritual Monism, and although it must of necessity be metaphysical, not scientific, we need not therefore distrust it.

(*c*) The attempt is sometimes made, by means of a theory of religious evolution, to represent Christianity as part of the natural history of man—to assign to it a natural genesis in ethnic beliefs and practices. For our present purpose we need do little more than refer to what has already been said in an earlier part of this article. It is undoubtedly true that Christianity has borrowed some things from external sources, and that its historical development has in part been shaped by influences similar to those that

have fashioned gentile religions. The foundation of Christianity, however, is not to be found in ethnic beliefs and practices, but in a divine fact—that fact which the Church sets forth in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Those who seek to " naturalize " our faith believe that doctrine to be mythical—to involve a mythical attribution of Godhead to the man Jesus. But the Gospels, which record the Incarnation, are not mythopœic,[1] and the Epistles, in their witness to the Church's earliest faith, witness to something that presupposes history and not myth.

Has, then, Christianity no part in the religious development of man ? Assuredly it has ; for it interprets and completes that development. But this does not make it co-ordinate with other faiths. We may say, if we will, that the religious history of man constitutes a unity ; but that unity, like the unity of Nature—of which, indeed, it is but an aspect —has its ground, not in the mere sequence of events, but in a spiritual purpose.

(*d*) To our fathers in the Faith the Christian *credenda* constituted an unchanging deposit, sufficiently given once for all, and therefore incapable of increase ; necessary in all its parts, and therefore not to be diminished. The Christian standards of belief were in the past, and, although they were propounded by a present authority, that authority

[1] See Fairbairn's *Philosophy of the Christian Religion.*

was primarily a witnessing authority, and its witness was to a univocal tradition. It set forth, or it purported to set forth, what Christians had always believed, from the first Whitsuntide onwards. Along the borders of "the unchanging East" ancient communities, rigidly conservative, stood proudly in the ancient ways, living echoes of Christian antiquity, and to that same antiquity the Catholics of England appealed in order to justify the Reform that had made yet another breach in the polity of Christendom. Even Rome herself—from and not against whom our Tudor forbears had reformed because of her innovations[1]—even Rome herself claimed but to make articulate what the Church had always held. Throughout Catholic Christendom it was generally agreed that the Church taught truly because she remembered rightly and propounded only her memories. This is still the belief of the great majority of Churchmen.

There are some, however, to whom Christian history, no less than other history, is a process of continual "becoming"—who trace, in the history of the Church, movements which have enlarged the content of Christian belief, and have even created new *credenda*. Some regard this development as mischievous or unnecessary, and invite us to return to the real or imagined simplicity of the earliest

[1] See Sir Thomas Browne's "*Religio Medici*" (section 3).

Christian days. Others accept it, at least along one line—the line which for the present ends in Papal Infallibility—and seek to justify its results. Yet others—men within our own communion—tell us that whatever the Time-process defines bears the marks of the defining time, and receives therefrom characteristics which become obsolete, and limitations which a later day outgrows. From this they infer more or less of freedom from the letter of old definitions—even from formularies which they themselves have subscribed and use.

Now, it is apparent upon the surface of things that, in a world of unceasing change, the Church has not been immobile. And the movement we discern in the history of the Christian Society has affected not only the external order of that Society, but also the beliefs of its members. The writers of *Contentio Veritatis* do not believe precisely what the Nitrian monks believed, nor the Abbé Loisy precisely what St. Anselm believed. Nor has this movement ranged only through private opinions and popular beliefs. The Creeds themselves are moments in it. Christian belief, then, like other bodies of belief, is an historical development, and undoubtedly its development has been furthered and to some extent shaped by psychological forces which have been elsewhere similarly operative. If we go behind this development we reach—what?

The life and faith of the infant Church ; the life and teaching of our Lord. Potent beyond all other lives, attractive as nothing else has ever been, the life of Our Lord is the world's perennial refreshment. His teaching the light of its noblest hope. And to-day there are many who would call us back to Him—would call us from the subtleties of dialectic and the rivalry of parties back to the fresh beauty of the Galilean springtime :

> "From all vain pomps and shows,
> From the pride that overflows
> And the false conceits of men,
> Back to the simple thought,
> By the great Master taught,
> 'Not he that nameth the name,
> But he that doeth the will!'"

"Back to Christ!" The words are inviting. But—Christ? The name contains a theology, and in the first confession of that name centuries of controversy were germinal. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"—thus was Our Lord first confessed among men, and the confession did more than disclose St. Peter's faith : it defined a problem which Christendom has never been able to ignore.

Return to Christ? Yes, to refresh our faith and to quicken our consciences—to be lifted above our insincerities and compromises into the light that is a consuming fire. Return to Him for this and for

such as this we will, but we shall not thereby escape from " the burden of thought " ; for, as we approach Him, we shall meet the question, " Whom say ye that I am ? " and, whatever be our answer, that answer will be the foundation of a theology, and will place us once more at the fruitful beginning of controversy.

And, indeed, it is not in fact to Christ that we are invited to return, but to Jesus not yet recognized as the Christ—to the wayfarer by Jacob's well, to the Teacher on the Mount, to Him who spake as never man yet spake. If we accept the invitation, and, in such way as we can, return to Him, what do we find ? A life which, more than any other life recorded in history, needs explanation.

Moreover, that life possesses religious value only when explained. Apart from explanation, we have an attractive Presence, and a teaching which appeals to what is best in us, although it sometimes invites us to the apparently imprudent. But the immediate value of these is ethical, not religious. They quicken us to better things and fill our lives with nobler hope, but the hope given and the more excellent things evoked are *human*—incidents in individual lives—and the value they possess is a *felt* value. Is it also real ? Are the things that are " lovely and of good report " more excellent only because we feel them to be better, or also because they further the

characteristic endeavour of man's self-determined life ?

Now, values, felt values, are determinants of conduct.[1] The characteristic life of man is not aimless, but intending—determined now to this end and now to that, and ends are indicated by values which give direction to his desire and content to his purpose. But a *felt* value is primarily psychological and may be misleading ; for there is no immediate inference from *felt* value to *real* value. We desire this or that because of some experienced value which we regard as a foretaste of its worth, but we cannot immediately infer from our desire that the thing we desire is attainable, or that, if attained, it would be really valuable : it might be detrimental. The foundation of life must be ontological, not merely psychological—must rest upon Truth, upon a doctrine of Reality, not upon a merely empirical satisfaction. In other words, life must be reasonable—otherwise we, who are " little lower than the angels," would be hardly better than the brutes ; for life divorced from reason would be only an instinctive following of chance delights. But life cannot be reasonable unless the values that determine it be, or convincingly seem to be, *real* values, and not merely *felt* values.

Goodness, we are told, is its own reward. True,

[1] Cp. pp. 192–3.

but what is goodness ? Not mere conscientiousness —the satisfaction that comes from a good conscience is *not* a sufficient ground for the good life—not merely an inclination towards the Right, but a concrete embodiment of the Right, a practical way of living which sets forth, not merely an aspiration, but also an achievement, and realizes the end that conscience indicates. Goodness consists, not in a mere inclination towards the moral ideal, not even in conscientious endeavours towards it, but in the gradual achievement of that ideal. But how do we know that achievement—complete achievement—is possible ? We do not know, and to many history has suggested a negative which makes goodness ironical, and its felt attraction a preliminary to pessimism. Ethics, as the science of conduct, must have its ground in metaphysics, because the good life, as a practicable ideal, presupposes a natural order which, if not itself good, is at least patient of goodness.

Not otherwise is it with the Christian life. Christ is attractive—" I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me "—and His call is inviting. But is the Christian vocation a reasonable vocation —one which determines life to reasonable ends ? If we obey the call of Christ we have to turn aside from many a near pleasure, to forego many a fair-seeming opportunity for distinction and profit. We

have to take up our cross daily, to " crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof," to know, for and in ourselves, the temptations of the wilderness, the bitterness of Gethsemane, the final renunciation of Calvary. Is the vocation which calls us to *this* a reasonable vocation ? It may be that, in the full springtime of strength, we have seen near at hand " all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," and a not ignoble great-mindedness has prompted us to enter and possess. But Christ calls us to another Kingdom and a different glory. Once more, is His call reasonable ?

He has Himself answered the question. Because He is what He is—throughout all future ages God Incarnate—His call is a reasonable call, and the values wherewith He attracts us are real values—attainable, permanent, consummating. The nature of Our Lord discloses the character of that other Nature which consists in Him. Because He is what He is, His vocation is a reasonable vocation, the ideal He proposes is a valid ideal, the hope He quickens is a sure and certain hope. The Christian life, then, is a reasonable life because of the disclosure of Reality made by the Christian revelation —by the Person, the Life, and the Work of Our Lord.[1] That revelation is the primary deposit committed to the Church, and the Church's primary

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic.*

duty is to preserve that deposit unimpaired, and to renew the witness of it in and to each succeeding age.

Now, the Christian revelation has its ground in certain historical facts. It is, indeed, a revelation of *truth*—a revelation of the Divine Fatherhood—but the truth is manifest and commended to us in and through a Person and a Life. These historical facts—the Personality and Life of Our Lord—are the primary elements in "the faith once delivered to the saints." They have come to us, even as they came to the first believers, not as mere events, but as significant events; and, from the very beginning of Christian history, the Church has sought to fulfil its mission by setting forth that significance and preserving it from derogation. It has no power to add to the deposit which it has received; it has no right to subtract therefrom. Its primary function is that of a missionary witness; its primary duty is to make convincingly plain the reality and meaning of the Incarnation.

Therefore, its work has been explanatory and definitive. It has had to set forth that which it received, and to preserve the meaning, and therefore the power, of that gift from depravation. In the discharge of this duty it has sometimes essayed definitions that seem speculative; but its interest, even when its work has been most clearly metaphysical, has always been a practical interest. *Non*

in dialecticâ complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum : not by dialectic, but by a Person and a Life, and the definitions of the Creeds are but attempts to refresh the Church's memory of the Son of Man, to keep effectual our apprehension of Him who is our Life.

The Christian revelation is operative unto salvation, not by some process or transaction entirely external to us, but only in proportion as it becomes determinant of life through a re-creating faith. It is efficacious unto life eternal, not as a thing given, but as a thing received. Christ becomes our life through the apprehension of faith, and of His fulness we receive in proportion to the receptivity of our apprehending faith. Were the world's faith in Him to become a faith in one who is only " of *like* substance with the Father," men would not for long continue to receive the full " benefits of His Passion." Were His assumption of manhood Docetic, our ideals would still remain unverified.

And because the religious value of Our Lord thus has its ground in His metaphysical nature,[1] the Church has not hesitated to be boldly definitive—not in order to add a new chapter to the history of human curiosity, but to defend the foundation of man's holiest hope and of his worthiest life. " If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is your faith

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 25.

vain," was the Apostolic message to some of the first believers, and in her formal definitions the Church does but variously repeat that authoritative warning.

The development of the Church's standards witnesses, therefore, to the vigilance of the Christian Society against errors that, if accepted, would have depraved the faith which that Society exists to guard and set forth; and, Spirit-guided though we believe that Society to be, its utterances are obviously human—addressed to human minds, expressed in human terms. Therefore they are not free from the relativity which marks all things human. Each is shaped by the need that occasioned it, and by the vocabulary of contemporary thought. And, because the vocabulary of thought is not permanent, phrases taken from the living speech of one age require a commentary in the next, and can reach the minds of the unlearned only through translation.

When the Church repeats the œcumenical definitions of the earliest age her speech seems archaic, and some think it therefore less valuable. It is clear, for instance, that the Nicene category of "substance" is not the Hegelian category. But we know sufficiently what the Nicene Fathers meant to affirm when they used it to define the Nature of Our Lord, and, although their speech is foreign to us, their meaning is intelligible and valuable—as

valuable to us as to them. We may, if we will and can, for our private profit or missionary advantage, put the thought into modern dress—translate the *homoousion*—but if we do we are only useful servants of Catholic tradition, not pioneers of freedom.

It is a mere misconception to say that the Church imposes upon thought the fetters of an obsolete philosophy. Its definitions re-affirm the ultimate evangelical facts. They are not so much new interpretations as attempts to preserve the original interpretations received from our Lord Himself and from His Apostles. The primary allegiance of our thought is to those evangelical facts in the primitive freshness of their meaning and value. If we can re-present them in a form more acceptable to our own day than is the patristic re-presentation, we are at liberty to do so, but the patristic re-presentation will remain as valuable as ever—and, for its own purposes, as valid as ever. We can gain only a *practical* advantage by the most accurate translation, and by no translation or re-presentation can we increase the freedom of the Christian theologian and the Christian philosopher. Indeed, the polemic against the metaphysic of the Creeds ceases to be trivial only when it disguises a changed attitude towards the evangelical *facts*.

(*e*) We have said that the Christian religion is based upon a certain divine episode in history,—

upon the historical revelation wherein and whereby God, in the Person of Christ, commended to us His love. The facts of this revelation constitute the primary deposit committed to the Church, and the Church exists to set forth these facts efficaciously to each succeeding age, "for the healing of the nations." We say to set them forth *efficaciously*. The Church is more than a witnessing Church; she is a missionary Church. She has not only to set forth the evangelical facts in their evangelical significance, but has to make those facts persuasive in the hearts and minds of men. The Christian revelation had its ground in a practical purpose, and the Church, which sets forth that revelation, is instrumental to that purpose: it is appointed to continue, through all earthly time, that renewing and saving work in the lives of men which was commenced by Our Lord Himself. And in performing this work it has to explain the revelation it sets forth, and to develop the evangelical significance of that revelation into a reasonable faith. Everywhere those who, however imperfectly, have essayed to do this work have spoken, not only to the hearts of men, but also to their minds, and have attempted to make thought re-present, in a form intellectually credible, the content of Faith. Hence have arisen the theologies of Christendom.

Now, if it be true that even the œcumenical creeds

are not exempt from the relativity which characterizes all human thought, yet more clearly and widely is it true that the several bodies of Christian theology are marked by the same relativity. Local and personal preoccupations with this or that particular element in the content of Christian belief, temporary ways of thought and modes of feeling, have all left marks of limitation upon the several bodies of doctrine whereby Christian men have variously tried to set forth the truth wherein they have found life.

Christian thought is part of the general movement of thought, and we can detect in its several forms the principal phases of that movement. German theology differs from Alexandrian partly, at least, because it is informed by a different philosophy—because Kant and Hegel were not Neo-Platonists. Calvin's thought was dominated by a conception of the Divine Nature which seems to us to-day Muhammadan rather than Christian, and his initial mistake has left its impress upon his entire system. Similarly, Luther's preoccupation with his characteristic doctrine of "salvation by faith" was a disturbing preoccupation, and one scarcely less potent than Calvin's. The Roman doctrine of transubstantiation has its ground in a metaphysical theory which, although at one time general among the learned of Western Europe, is not now taught

outside the Roman Catholic schools; and many forms of English religion have been largely influenced by an exaggerated individualism which has ignored the mediating work of the witnessing and edifying Church. The Thirty-nine Articles speak to us in a language we are forgetting of controversies we have forgotten; and the succession of more or less valuable opinions which embody the post-Reformation theology of the Church of England reflect every important change in English thought and in the interests of English life.

In the presence of these diversities, of this universal relativity, the question immediately arises: Is there, then, no theological authority that can tell us, with sufficient certainty, what Christian men ought to believe? Probably few would answer this question negatively, and, indeed a negative answer would be misleading. But it seems quite clear that the ordinary affirmative answers promise too much.

There are those who tell us that the Holy Scriptures are the ground and standard of theological truth. But what is the nature of Scriptural authority, and what is its range? We must remember that the Christian Scriptures were not intended to be manuals of theology. They are, indeed, full of theological teaching; but that teaching is fragmentary, occasional, incidental, and contains many things that are hard to be understood. Moreover,

the Apostolic writings bear the clear impress of the Time-spirit. Indeed, the closer our scrutiny of these writings, the clearer does it become that they do not teach *sub specie æternitatis*—that the presentation of Christian doctrine is a temporal mode of presentation. For instance, St. Paul's doctrine of original sin seems to be a moment in a long development which goes back far into Jewish history, and has its ground in the undated narratives with which the Hebrew Scriptures commence.[1]

Those narratives point back to remote ethnic mythologies, and we are now discovering that their religious value has its ground in the purpose and process which transformed those crude imaginings of the world's early darkness into the lucid poetry of new spiritual conceptions.[2] Now, it seems permissible, if not obligatory, to interpret some things in the New Testament in the same way—to regard them as Christian adaptations of non-Christian beliefs. By such adaptation those beliefs were "baptized into Christ," and received Christian value and significance. They became organic to a new spirit and a new thought, which they express—not *sub specie æternitatis*, but in temporal modes. When the times change, and new conceptions rule

[1] Cp. F. R. Tennant *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin.*

[2] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* p. 23.

the thoughts of men, re-statement becomes necessary. But re-statement should be, not of the temporal mode which has become obsolete, but of the Christian content which that mode at one time made intelligible. In other words, our interpretation of the Christian Scriptures must be guided by the thought of *purpose*. We must look beyond the written word to the Christian conception which the written word was intended to set forth.

But, if this be true, it is necessary to revise the ordinary conception of Scriptural authority. Apostolic theology is a temporal presentation of evangelical truth—of the truth once for all given to the world in and through the Incarnation, in and through that significant divine history which constitutes the Christian revelation. *This*—this revelation—is what a Christian man ought to believe. "*This* is the Catholic Faith." Outside what is revealed we have only temporal modes of presentation, valuable only in so far as they make our apprehension of Our Lord efficacious unto life.[1] Theology has a practical end, and we derive the criterion of its value from the purpose that informs it.

There are others who find theological authority in the teaching of the Church, and who accept as certainly true whatever has always been generally

[1] At this point the philosophy of Christian belief becomes part of the general Philosophy of Probability.

believed throughout the Christian Society. Now, the Church's unbroken presentation of the primary evangelical deposit is, doubtless, of fundamental importance for Christian life and thought ; but her re-presentation of those facts in formal theology is a re-presentation subject to historical conditions—to human interests, to human knowledge, to the forms and usages of human thought. If a given re-presentation be, indeed, universal and perduring, those notes—which are sometimes said to be notes of catholicity — may indicate nothing more than the universal presence of relatively permanent conditions.

Once again the thought of *purpose* recurs. The re-presentations which are integral in Christian belief are re-presentations in temporal modes—not *sub specie æternitatis*. The authority of the Church is primarily the authority of a witnessing Society, and that authority does not extend to her temporal modes of re-presentation. These, like the Apostolic re-presentations, are " valuable only in so far as they make our apprehension of Our Lord efficacious unto life " ; but they do not constitute a completely authoritative *corpus* of doctrine.

Is it said that the Church is not merely a human society, but the Spirit-bearing Body which inherits the unfailing promises of her Lord ? True, but why were those promises made ? why the Spirit given ?

In order, we say, that the Christian revelation might be perennially effective for the salvation of the world. Yet again the thought of *purpose* recurs. Our Lord made and keeps His Church a Divine Society, stronger than the gates of hell, in order that men may be saved through Him—through living apprehension of the " full, perfect, and sufficient " revelation made once for all in His unique Person and uniquely beneficial death. We may not extend the Divine help beyond the range of the Divine purpose. That purpose is accomplished when Christ Crucified is evidently set forth, and men, apprehending that exhibited Love, find therein their life. But the intellectual modes which (through representative thought) help their apprehension belong to the world's changing history, and not to that unchanging deposit which the Church exists to guard and set forth, to the greater glory of God, through all earthly ages.

The Ground of Faith

The Ground of Faith

PART I

I

WHAT is the essential characteristic of the Christian religion? What is it that makes a man Christian? To these questions widely different answers have been given. The religion has sometimes been represented as a rule of life, sometimes as a way of salvation, sometimes as a doctrine which (although a doctrine of salvation) has been, primarily, in its formal expression, a scheme of cosmology. And while some have derived the Christian *status* of the believer from the act which made him a member of some visible Christian society, others have derived it from his obedience to the great normal precepts of the Christian life, and others from the personal faith wherein Christ has become "the power of God unto salvation." The answers have been widely different, and yet the last analysis leaves us with but one answer. The essential characteristic of the Christian religion is faith in Christ, and it is faith in Christ that makes a man Christian. The rule of life, which some have thought to be the one essential in our religion, comes from Christ, and has been accepted,

if not otherwise, at least in this way: through the persuasiveness of His great example, which has evoked a trust involving and pre-supposing faith. The way of salvation can be trodden only by faith, and the doctrine, even when most clearly cosmological, has never been presented apart from the Incarnate Life, or from the faith which discovers therein the revelation of God. In the thought of many the conception of the Christian Society is primary and fundamental, and men have often spoken of membership in that Society quite non-ethically—as though it were a magical thing, that obtained the gifts of God magically,—but a wiser thought has always recognised that membership becomes effectual unto salvation only through the faith that joins the several members unto Christ their Head.

The Christian religion has shown itself to the world in many very different forms, and the Christian life has been practised in many very different ways. But (these differences notwithstanding) wherever men have with serious intention called themselves Christian—in the Nitrian Desert, on Worcester field; in the Roman catacombs, among the moss-hags of Galloway; in Anglican convocations, in Wesleyan class-meetings; in Alexandrian Schools, in Congolese huts; amid the splendid ritual of the Orthodox East, and around pioneer camp-fires, where the familiar

hymn and the open Word furnished the only "forms"—men have always confessed that the new life wherein they stood was rooted and grounded in faith. They have construed the Christian life differently, they have followed different disciplines, and professed different creeds, but behind all these differences—deeper and more significant—has been the common fact which has made them all Christian—their faith in Christ, and, although they have thought differently even of this faith and its results, they have never thought of it as other than the one thing that has given them a separate vocation, and introduced them to a new hope. In every time and in every place, men have been made Christian by faith in Christ, and by that alone.

II

But what account can we give of this fundamental faith? It seems easy to say that faith—and Christian faith no less than any other—is trust, that Christian men are Christian because of their distinctive trust in Christ. And, undoubtedly, an act of faith is an act of trust. But trust appears to be an expression of faith, rather than faith itself. Trust always involves faith, but the commencement and first movements of faith are anterior to trust: we trust because we have faith.

But, if faith be not trust, what is it ?

We ordinarily incline to think that faith is a mode of apprehension—a power whereby we lay hold of Truth. But knowledge also is a mode of apprehension—the act of knowing is an act of apprehension. How, then, is faith distinguished from knowledge ? The question is not an easy one, but we may commence to answer it by saying that, whereas knowledge apprehends things apparent or demonstrable, faith is operative beyond the range of perception and demonstration. This does not imply that faith moves only in the realm of the Unreal. If it be mode of apprehension—and this, I think, it always purports to be,—it must be co-ordinate with knowledge, and, like knowledge, must, in its own way, give us *facts*.

Again, we may say that by faith we apprehend the probable, and in knowledge the obvious, but this account of the two functions is open to the criticism that many of the things we are ordinarily said to know are only probably true. Certain scientific doctrines—which are usually said to form part of our modern knowledge—are plainly of this character. Some who have observed this have hastened to conclude that all human apprehensions—even scientific apprehensions—are apprehensions of faith, but, in thus hastening, they have omitted to notice that our apprehension of things we are said to know—

be those things certainties or probabilities—is, as a "subjective" occurrence, widely different in character from the apprehensions of faith. The atomic theory of matter, for instance, was at one time said to form part of the common knowledge of educated men. It was, even then, known to be only probably true, but the act wherein men apprehended it was widely different from the Christian's apprehension of Christ. The one act was characteristically intellectual; the other as characteristically volitional.

Now, as pragmatists constantly tell us, there is somewhat of volition (conation) in every act of knowledge—at least, in every act that rises above the simplest awareness, above anoetic consciousness. But, in our ordinary acts of knowledge, the will seems active only in the originating movement of purposeful attention, and the process of apprehension is not concluded by an act of the will. The volitional co-efficients in knowledge, although actual, are ordinarily inconspicuous. In acts of faith, however, it is these co-efficients that are ordinarily conspicuous.[1]

[1] (1) "The worlds of knowledge and action have assumed such huge proportions, have accumulated such immense and complicated resources, have gained such supreme confidence in their own stability . . . that we have lost count of their formal assumption. In amazement at their stupendous range, we are overawed; we dare not challenge them with their hypothetical origin, or remind them that their entire and wonderful structure is but an empty and

The analysis is incomplete, but it is not, I think, misleading, and it suggests this answer to our question: Faith is a volitional act; it purports to be an act of apprehension, and its term—the "fact" it "apprehends"—lies beyond the range of demonstration and perception. If we add that the object of our completer faith—if not also of our less complete—is always a person, and that the object of Christian faith is the Person of Christ, we have a provisional conception which may at least serve as a starting-point for the further explorations of Christian thought.

III

Faith, we have seen, is normally active where the conditions of demonstration are absent. It is not

hollow dream, unless they are prepared to place their uttermost trust in an unverified act of faith. . . ."

* * * * * *

"Our secular and scientific life is an immense experiment in faith. . . ."—Canon Scott Holland's Essay on "Faith" (*Lux Mundi*, p. 25).

(2) Mr. Balfour, it will be remembered, has reached the conclusion that the conceptions fundamental in scientific knowledge are not demonstrably valid. But when he essays to describe the grounds of belief he speaks of authority, not faith. It seems clear, however, that the authority he propounds is not ultimate. It is psychological, not philosophical. If Mr. Balfour's doctrine be true, the authority he sets forth explains the origin of certain of our beliefs, but it does not immediately furnish a criterion of their validity. Analysis of that "authority" would probably bring Mr. Balfour to some kind of Pragmatism.

limited by our proven knowledge, nor does it derive therefrom its characteristic affirmations. It is, or it purports to be, an independent mode of apprehension, with a sphere and methods of its own, and (as it always believes) with *criteria* of its own.

This independence of faith is well illustrated by our human love, which is the completeness of faith.

Like faith, love is volitional.[1] It is characteristically a determination of the *will*—of life's practical activities, not of dispassionate thought—and it is often splendidly defiant of the prudent reason. Those that truly love always claim that love is a form of knowledge, but the " knowledge " it gives—like the " certainties " apprehended by religious faith—is always indemonstrable. Although, however, the things it reports be beyond demonstration, love seems the most truthful thing on earth, and it inspires the hearts it enriches to successful essays of chivalrous adventure such as unloving hearts dare not attempt. Love has its own *Welt-Anschauung*, apparent only to itself and indemonstrable—save by love to love.

As the apprehensions of love (like those of faith)

[1] The volitional character of faith has not always been sufficiently recognised even by those who have written on behalf of faith. In the " Grammar of Assent," for instance, it is obscured by Newman's characteristic doctrine of the illative sense, which suggests receptivity, rather than activity, purpose, and will.

are beyond the range of our proven knowledge, so also are they not derived from the things co-efficient in that knowledge—from reason and perceptual information. Now, proven knowledge is the privilege of a few, but love is a general benediction, and the indemonstrable treasures of her new world are open to the learned and the unlearned alike.

This catholicity of love is consequent upon its very nature. Love is the soul's response to the gift of life[1]—to those personal influences that impart to life new strength, revive it by a new hope, and transform it by the power of a new ideal. Now, this gift of life is one that, according to our several capacities and needs, we can all receive. No life is sufficient unto itself ; no life is wholly callous to its own good ; no life is wholly unresponsive to things that make for its good. Therefore, every life is, in some measure, capable of love.

Now, because love is the completeness of faith, faith also is a response to gifts whereby men live, and the capacity for faith is as universal as the capacity for receiving those gifts, and the need for them.

This brings us to a very important conclusion : a religion founded upon faith is (potentially at least) genuinely catholic, because not limited to " those

[1] Cp. my *Patriotism : An Essay Towards a Constructive Theory of Politics*, p. 14.

who know," but open to all. And such the Christian religion—which is founded upon faith in Christ—has always claimed to be. It is catholic because it makes an universal appeal to an universal capacity and an universal need. It is catholic because it is a religion of faith.

IV

If faith be thus independent—if it be an independent mode of apprehension, and have its own independent *criteria* of truth—the affirmations of faith must also be independent. They are, *ex hypothesi*, beyond the range of rationalistic criticism, for faith and reason of the rationalistic sort are disparate : they may not be set aside by the apprehensions of what the world ordinarily calls reason, for knowledge apprehends an aspect of reality other than that apprehended by faith, and the apprehensions of faith are, *ex hypothesi*, at least co-ordinate, and have an independent right of their own.

A religion of faith has its ground in the assurances of faith, and this ground (it would seem) is ultimate and unassailable. Upon this ground Christian believers have ever fallen back when pressed by questionings they could not answer.

But Christian men have always thought that questions should be answered, and have endeavoured

to commend their message, not only to the world's heart, but also to its mind. They have attempted to prove that Christian doctrines are true or, at least, not unreasonable, and that the historical basis alleged for them is a real basis—one genuinely historical. The early Christian apologetic against Judaism found a sufficient ground of inference in the common acceptance by Jews and Christians of the Old Testament prophecies, and, from this common ground, attempted to prove Christianity true by exhibiting it as the fulfilment of prophecy. But, from the earliest times, Christian thinkers have met opponents who did not accept the Scriptures. In these cases the common ground of inference has been more remote, and apologetic has had to take a wider range. Justin, arguing against Trypho, could adduce the witness of the Old Testament Scriptures, for they were recognised as authoritative by both his opponent and himself. But against the critics on Mars' Hill, or against Celsus, the second century representative of the New Paganism, such an argument had been unavailing, for neither they nor he received the Scriptures as authoritative. And in recent centuries the chief controversy of Christian apologetic has been with men who, like the Athenians of St. Paul's day and Celsus one hundred and fifty years later, have stood beyond the range of Scriptural proof. In these later centuries the

common ground of discussion—and without some common ground discussion is not possible—has been either a philosophical doctrine, or an ethical conception, or some " common-sense " view or scientific interpretation of Nature. Butler, arguing against Deists who believed Nature to be the work of God, attempted to show the analogy between the work admitted to be from God—Nature—and that alleged to be from God—the Christian system. T. H. Green, writing against those who believed Nature to be essentially non-spiritual and contended that man is merely part thereof, started from the knowledge of Nature common to himself and his opponents, and attempted thence to infer (through epistemology) the existence of God. Others, accepting the scientific conceptions of uniformity and evolution, have attempted to show either that those conceptions did not exclude, or else that they presupposed, a theistic cosmology. And yet others—themselves disciples in the modern school of Idealism —have attempted to prove that the Absolute is personal, and have hoped thereby to establish in philosophy the foundations of a theistic faith. None of these demonstrations, however, include the essentials of our religion. Butler shows only that the Christian system *may* have come from God,[1]

[1] " Butler did not try to show that the difficulties of revealed truth prove its Divine origin (*credo quia absurdum*),

and Green leaves us with the thought that Nature presupposes the existence of a spiritual self-conscious Principle, which is the bond and ground of its unity. But acceptance of neither demonstration would make a man Christian. Similarly, a man does not become Christian merely by accepting a proffered demonstration that biological evolution is teleological, or that the Absolute is personal. All these demonstrations, if valid, are valuable, but they do not cover the cardinal particulars of Christian belief, and do not infer that personal acceptance of Christ which alone makes a man Christian. And when our apologetic extends to that acceptance, and to the essentials of Christian belief and life, new difficulties arise. The apologetic demonstration presupposes the very faith that our opponents have not. For example, it is not difficult, by the ordinary methods of historical argument, to show reasonable ground for believing that a certain man named Jesus was "crucified under Pontius Pilate." But a demonstration that He who then died was and is God Incarnate, and that His death was an atonement for the world's sin, must, of necessity, presuppose processes of faith—interpretations or apprehensions which were

but only that they afford no logical presumption against a Divine origin, seeing that they exist in the natural order also, which the eighteenth century opponent admitted to be from God's hand."—Douglas Macleane, "Reason, Thought, and Language," p. 549.

originally acts of faith, and are still renewed only in the life of faith. It therefore becomes necessary for our apologetic to show the reasonableness of faith. Because Christianity is a religion of faith, it can be completely commended to the world's thought only by showing that the faith fundamental in it is a reasonable faith—one that gives a trustworthy interpretation or apprehension of the Real. And this can be completely accomplished only by making Christian epistemology cover the processes of faith. To do this is the distinctive task of present-day apologetic.

A Christian man's religion has its ground in his personal faith. This does not mean that he assents to each several article in the Christian creed by a separate act of faith, and that each assent is wholly an act of faith. Some, at least, of his assents follow upon inferences that seem to him sufficiently conclusive.[1] But even the strongest of his inferences receives its final conclusiveness from his faith —from that initial and continuous act wherein (to use familiar words) he "accepts Christ," from the distinctive act of faith that makes him a Christian. This act introduces a new factor, and one of primary importance, into his argument, and gives a new

[1] It seems probable that the assent wherewith educated believers affirm the Bodily Resurrection of Our Lord is ordinarily an assent of this kind.

value to the historical material he therein uses.[1] This act gives to his thought a new information which controls its later judgments.

But is the new content thus given to his thought trustworthy? He finds himself face to face with men who reject it,—although he himself holds it most precious,—who deny that faith is trustworthy, and refuse to recognise it as a mode of apprehension. If he essay to prove to them that the religion wherein he lives is not unreasonable, and, if he pursue this attempt to the end, he must, sooner or later, show, or try to show, that the faith which is the immediate or ultimate ground of his most important assents gives true information. Now, he cannot prove that the informations of faith are trustworthy informations by any argument that does not presuppose or involve affirmations of faith. Therefore, he must show, or try to show, that faith is, in fact, what it

[1] Suppose a man who, by an act of faith, believes that Christ is God Incarnate to believe also that the Resurrection of Christ was not merely a spiritual but a bodily Resurrection. Suppose, further, that he is called upon to prove the reasonableness of this latter belief. That primary faith of his—wherein he apprehends the Incarnation of God—will form part of his argument. It will influence the course of his thought from the very beginning, and will give high probability to reports that, in "the high and dry light of the understanding," would seem quite improbable.

Cp. the discussion of the Christian presuppositions and their influence upon belief in Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* and Dr. Illingworth's *Reason and Revelation*.

purports to be—a cognitive faculty, a valid mode of apprehension, a means of contact with Reality that gains for us true or trustworthy information. Sooner or later his apologetic must develop into a philosophy of faith, into a new grammar of assent.

V

Ever since men began to reflect independently of tradition, widely different opinions have been held concerning the nature of man. At the one extreme of thought we find unqualified materialism, like that of the Hindu Chārvākas, who frankly said: "The body *is* the man, and everything in human life is corporeal."[1] At the other extreme are those who find in the self-consciousness of man (in the very existence of human knowledge) sufficient indication of a principle that is not corporeal but spiritual—of a principle that perdures identically the same through all changes in knowledge, and binds together the constant succession of things known and done into the unity of one experience.

[1] Saṅkara, in his account of the Chārvāka system, says: "The faculty of thought results from a modification of the aggregate elements in like manner as sugar with a ferment and other ingredients becomes an inebriating liquor." *Sarva-Darsāna-Saṃgraha*, by Mádhava Áchárya (translated by Cowell and Gough), p. 3, note 1.

Cp. the well-known doctrine of eighteenth century materialism: the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile.

Until a period in the history of reflection which is not yet remote, men ordinarily thought of things *known* as things *given*, and believed the spiritual principle indicated by knowledge to be characteristically passive or receptive—to be something that perceived events and received informations without any apprehending act of its own—to be, indeed, the *subject* in knowledge, but not an *agent* in knowledge.

But man is not merely cognitive, he is also active : he not only *knows*, but he *does*.

So long as men thought the spiritual principle in knowledge to be only *subject*, and not agent, it was impossible for them to conceive of that principle as the ground of man's volitional life. Sometimes—as in certain of the Hindu schools—they attributed feeling and will to the corporeal factors in man's present complex individuality—to factors that were outside the merely watchful intelligence, and were left behind at death, or at some stage in man's *post-mortem* life. Christian thought also has at certain times, left knowledge the supreme prerogative of " spirit," and has attributed man's emotional and active life to a separate principle—the soul—which was, however, ordinarily believed to be immaterial.

The conations and feelings thus excluded from the subject in knowledge are, however, *known* by that

subject, and known by it, not as things presented to it from without, but as events in its own essential life. The subject in knowledge knows itself to be also the subject in feeling and the agent in volition.

Moreover, there came a time when a new scrutiny of knowledge showed the subject thereof to be also agent therein. Any " awareness " that is more than momentary, any " awareness " that is an " awareness " of successive *events*, implies the action of a perduring principle—always identical with itself—which knows each instant of " awareness " to be its own, and, at least, retains the information of each instant in memory. And not one of the informations thus retained is a thing *merely given*—it is a thing *interpreted*. The thing *given* we may call a feeling : the thing *known* is not a feeling, but a *meaning*—the meaning of the thing given. When we see a friend's face, the *given* element in the perception is a variously coloured surface of a certain size and shape, but the content of our perception—the thing *known* in the perception—is not that surface, but its meaning. Neither in the memory of events, nor in the transition from *quality* to *meaning*, from the *merely given* to *knowledge*, can we conceive the knowing subject to be inactive.

Yet more clearly can the agency of the knowing subject be perceived in the processes whereby scattered particulars of information are organised

into one body of knowledge, for, in these processes, attention and selection, interest and purpose, are predominant, and all these are *acts*—acts of the knowing subject, acts wherein the subject in knowledge is also an agent.

By reflection upon these things we have to-day reached a conception of unitary personality to which our earlier forerunners in thought had not attained, and we believe the spiritual principle that is self-conscious in personal life to be characteristically an active principle.[1]

Now, what is it that moves this principle to activity? Partly the stimulus of man's environment, and partly the inner needs of his life.

[1] Cp. Goethe's *Faust.*

"Geschreiben steht: 'Im Anfang war das Wort!'
Hier stock' ich schon! Wir hilft mir weiter fort?
* * * * * *
Mir hilft der Geist! Auf einmal seh' ich Rath
Und schreibe getrost: Im Anfang war die That!"

"The willing department of our nature dominates both the conceiving department and the feeling department."

"It is impossible to disguise the fact that in the psychology of our own day the emphasis is transferred from the mind's purely rational function where Plato and Aristotle, and what one may call the whole classic tradition in philosophy, had placed it to the so long neglected practical side."—*Talks to Teachers*, Prof. Wm. James.

"If any one of the three species of conscious elements is to be regarded as the original form of consciousness, it must evidently be the will."—*Outlines of Psychology*, Höffding, p. 99.

Our human life is not comparable—or is comparable only as a contrast—with merely physical existence, for, whatever be its origin, it is maintained only by constant renewal. It is not only a *process*, but a process maintained by *effort*. Things that are merely physical are—*pace* Professor Hæckel—effortless.

What moves man to this self-maintaining effort? The answer is obvious: Need and Desire. Man is moved to self-maintenance (to self-preservation, as we ordinarily say), primarily by felt needs—*e.g.*, by hunger—and the desires therewith correlated. His primary need is to live—to continue in life, to maintain, by incessant renewal, the processes wherein his life subsists. We believe that he is essentially spiritual, but his present complex individuality is largely biological, and his earliest needs are biological, and therein—in those biological needs—have his first self-preserving activities their ground. Ordinarily the mere continuance of life—of this earthly life—is good, or seems good in contrast with death. But mere continuance in life is not our only good, for certain kinds of life, certain kinds of self-conscious experience, are better than others. Human nature is not merely intelligent, nor merely active: it is also sensitive. Life is known in *feeling*, and, even if it be true that our life-feeling—the feeling-content of experience—is sometimes neutral towards

desire, it is undoubtedly true that it sometimes invites and sometimes repels. Experience, we say, is sometimes desirable, sometimes undesirable. It is made either the one or the other by the felt quality of its ever-changing content—of the events which *are* experience. Desirable quality in life constitutes *value* in life. This value subsists in value-feelings, and by it alone is man satisfied. All desirable qualities—all values—are not equally satisfying, but all are in some measure satisfying.

Now, vital value (life of a satisfying quality) is the natural term of human effort[1]—if not of all

[1] (1) The highest value is that of life become complete in and through love. This value can become entirely actual only in a society perfectly informed and knit together by perfect love—only through communion with God, in the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

God—who is Love—has not appointed unto man an end wholly external to his life, but one wherein his life will become complete. This end, man's essential nature—which is pre-determined to the life of love—makes the most valuable of all ends. All lower values are transient and imperfect, but in the perfect life of perfect love there is consummating and eternal value, and the concomitant thereof is—*peace*.

(2) This doctrine of "value-determination" has interesting affinity with the Thomistic ethics. (See Father Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*.)

It should, however, be carefully distinguished from Mr. Campbell's doctrine. Man always seeks his own good, and his highest good is life with God, but only by an abuse of language and an unpardonable laxity of thought can one allege that, even in his sins, man is blunderingly seeking God. Cp. my *Is the New Theology Christian?* pp. 147–8.

effort, at least of all that rises above the level of mere self-preservation—and all man's spiritual construction and devising in history, all his polities and his policies, are resultant from witting or unwitting effort thereunto determined. In this age-long effort we have the common ground of all spiritual progress and of all material civilisation.[1]

The world, we believe, was appointed to be man's home, and potential in his nature are capacities and powers which, as they have developed, have ennobled his life with priceless gain. But the world becomes his home only through his subduing toil, and the gains that to-day increase the goodness of life have ben won by blood and tears, by strenuous endeavour, by patient endurance, by stern self-discipline, by the martyred and heroic lives that we hold in perpetual remembrance, and by those that are recorded only in the memory of God. Whatever man has reaped, that he has first sown, and neither the sowing nor the reaping has been effortless.

At first, it may be, man was perforce content if, for the sustenance of an almost animal life, he could wrest an uncertain food from the unkindly earth, but, as Time went on, there came increasing strength to that informing potency which makes him always more than animal, even when most like the brutes

[1] Cp. my *Patriotism*, p. 41.

in the daily course of his life. New needs arose, new aims shaped themselves—needs that were not bodily, aims that were not animal, but rational, æsthetic, moral. With this development of man's *interest* went a development of his *nature*, and through the slow centuries these developments continued side by side with equal steps (*potency* therein gradually passing into *act*), until at last there arose the humane ideal of life's completeness (in which all earlier and particular aims were consummated)—until at last there dawned upon man's longing a far-off vision of Perfect Goodness, which made his highest aspirations articulate, and in which all that he most desired seemed real.

In the course of this advance man subdued the earth to his needs, and made it helpfully habitable. Nature has now become ancillary to his purpose, but at first it was a besetting and seemingly animate menace, from which vigilant hardihood could only uncertainly wrest a scanty sustenance, and from the beginning men saw life vanish into a darkness that seemed populous with intangible and dangerous powers.

Out of the needs and fears of this early savagery arose the rudiments of religion. By sacrifice, and by simple devices that afterwards became an elaborate magic, man sought to disarm his invisible foes and to make the unseen powers helpful. And

the need for some friendly mediation between man and his environment—by thought, by worship, by ritual or ethical observances—has never ceased. The world, it is true, is no longer strange to us—no longer instantly hostile. We have explored its recesses—where monstrous dangers were aforetime believed to lurk—and have found them untenanted, we have harnessed powers that once seemed uncontrollable, and we now walk securely where our remoter fathers trembled. Man has established himself in the world, and made it, to some extent, home-like, although, again and yet again, devastating irruptions from untamed depths either illustrate an ultimate Irony or give solemn emphasis to the warning: "Set not your affections on things below."

But the visible order of Nature, even when most beneficent, is not quite paternal, and man cannot be quite at home therein. He knows that one day this pleasant earth will become a lunar desert and his generations cease from off the face of it, and every day he still sees lives vanish into darkness, and learning, policy, and charity seemingly come to a fruitless end. At present we exercise a mastery in Nature which, although far from complete, is sufficient not only to sustain our lives, but also to enrich them with many things that are pleasant and good. We know, however, that this mastery is not

permanent. One day the inhospitable earth will be master, and will illustrate its mastery by extinction. And, even now, inevitable Death, as it hurries away our brief generations into what looks like destruction, seems to foreshadow that final defeat.

Man's mastery in nature is transient, and yet, did man need only bodily sustenance, and had his thought and impulse no higher term, this imperfect lordship might sufficiently content him, for to *this* need it makes the earth abundantly tributary. But " man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." Truth, beauty, and goodness have values that seem pre-eminent, and a moral vocation has become articulate within him, calling him away from earth's nearer pleasantness to romantic adventure for a good that neither field, nor mine, nor the now vintaged sea can furnish.

But is this unearthly adventure a reasonable one ? Is the good sought attainable, or is it :

> " An *ignis fatuus*, that bewitches
> And leads men into pools and ditches,"

where even the lower good that the subdued earth elsewhere yields abundantly is out of reach ? We do not know, and yet we need to know, for we would not live unreasonably. If that higher good be indeed attainable, it is sovereign, and other values are trivial, except as they help towards it. If it be unattainable, then moral adventure is a profitless

knight-errantry—as pitiable as Don Quixote's—and it were our wisdom to be bovine, and to graze peacefully in the meadows of terrestrial delight.

" Is this unearthly adventure a reasonable one ? " Our vocation to it is mandatory, but the world's order seems heedless of our vocation. Righteousness is not clearly profitable, nations groan beneath the burden of prosperous wrong-doing, natural processes cut thwartingly across the path of our moral endeavour and seem indifferent to moral values. Moreover, if death be destruction, what shall goodness profit a man ? Why should he deny himself to attain unto it ? If death be destruction—complete destruction—how can life's more arduous way be more excellent, and he who hears Life's highest call and obeys better than he who hears it not or does not heed it ?

Our practical mastery in Nature (in other words, our science) has made obsolete the practices whereby, in earlier days, man sought aid—sought increase for his scanty crops and protection against the dangers that lurked in darkness and in the unexplored places of the earth. Science has conquered the unfriendliness of Nature, and—sufficiently for all the interests of a merely animal life—has overcome the opposition between man's environment and the " natural " vocation that is inarticulate in his instinctive endeavour for self-maintenance. But, when the

mandate of our higher vocation echoes back—as it were in mockery—from heavens that are silent and from a world that seems indifferent, we discover another and more extreme opposition, and before this one our knowledge is powerless.

Out of this contrast between man's higher vocation and the world wherein—if man be not disobedient—the divine adventure of that vocation must be essayed there arises the deepest and most characteristic problem of modern thought.[1] But the problem itself is an old one, and, as it now confronts us, does but re-state in new terms that general opposition between man and nature which has made all human life a life of effort, and, in its lowest form, filled man's earliest generations with fear.[2]

In this opposition, and the human needs resultant therefrom, we have the ground of the world's religions. These differ widely from each other. Although all addressed to one problem, they construe that problem differently and solve it differently. But they all have this common characteristic : they endeavour to overcome the opposition between man and Nature by placing man, or attempting to place him, in some pertinently helpful relation with the

[1] "Heaven out of view, our wishes, what are they ?
Obsolete lamps, whose light no time recalls,
Urns without ashes, tearless lachrymals."
—*Wordsworth.*

[2] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian ?* Chap. II.

order that environs him. Religion, in every one of its forms, is an apparatus of belief and practice whereby such a relation is established or disclosed, or seems to be established or disclosed. This mediatory belief and practice constitutes the " objective element " in religion, and is essential in religion. Without it religion does not and cannot exist.[1]

VI

The religions of the world arise, I have said, out of the contradiction between human life and its environment. Each is an attempt to overcome some form or other of that contradiction : each is, more or less consciously, an attempt to solve the practical problem created by that contradiction. The Christian religion has its own distinctive solution of the world-problem—its own distinctive way of escape from the contradiction out of which that problem arises. Now, why do we, who profess and call ourselves Christians, prefer the Christian solution, the Christian way of escape ? In other words, why do we believe the Christian religion to be true ?

The ultimate ground of our belief is, I think, in personal experience.

The Christian religion is more than a rule of life

[1] Cp. my *New Way in Apologetic*, p. 13.

which the conscience approves, more than a body of doctrines which the speculative thought accepts. In its " objective " aspect it is the revelation given, once for all, in and through the person of Christ. In its " subjective " aspect it is " acceptance " of Christ.

By and through His Incarnation, God gives us assurance that He is love, and this assurance sufficingly overcomes the apparent contradiction between the natural order wherein we live and the ideals that call us to present self-sacrifice.

" To those who accept that assurance the doctrine that ' God is Love ' is not merely an article in an academic creed. They find the Divine Love illustrated in history by the Incarnation, interpreted by the Resurrection and Ascension, evidently set forth in the work of the Incarnate Life, presently operative in the unceasing ministry of the Church, and, whatever the questionings of doubt, the uplifted Cross quickens their faith into the triumphant rejoinder : ' He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things ? '

" ' So *Regnabit a ligno Deus.*' " [1]

But in what way do we apprehend the revelation whereby this great assurance is mediated ? By a faith wherein we repeat, each one for himself, St.

[1] *A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 19.

Peter's recognition: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Incarnation was a real Incarnation—not a mere theophany, transparent to the present God. Our Lord was (as He now is) very man, and although also very God, His Godhead was not a thing apparent to ordinary observation. St. Peter's recognition was an act of interpretation, and wherever we find a faith like unto his we find a like interpretation. And this interpretation is reached—how? It is not an inference similar to that wherein we affirm the existence of—let us say—inter-stellar ether. It is the result of a certain experience which does, for those who share it, what personal intercourse with our Lord did for the apostolic company; it awakens a recognitive and accepting faith.

We may say, if we will, with the Ritschlians, that this faith is awakened by the "impression" (*Eindruck*) of Christ, but, when awakened, it does more than affirm a value, it apprehends an essential character—a character which gives the experienced value ultimate validity. Christ is not God because He seems to have religious value: He has religious value because He is God. When we accept Him we affirm, not merely an experience of value, but a metaphysical interpretation of His Person—an interpretation which makes our experience of His value trustworthy.

Our interpretation, I have said, is not an inference, and it carries us beyond the range of inference. We may well call it an act of faith, but in that act we know ourselves to be cognitive, and not imaginative. And upon this certainty—the certainty that our faith is what it purports to be, is veritably a recognition, an apprehension of Reality truly present although not apparent to sense—our Christian belief rests.

If we enquire further into the experience that evokes this faith, we shall, I think, find that, in some form or other, it is immediately an experience of what is best described as life-giving grace.[1] It confirms us in our vocation to the highest, and does this by giving us a new energy and a new hope. It is characteristically operative, not immediately upon the understanding, but upon the will, upon the active potencies in our nature, which it quickens to a new purpose towards goodness. Those potencies are essential in the very constitution of our nature, and are the ground of our ideals. Indeed, our ideals do but set forth their complete actuality.[2] The new strength given to those potencies in and through Christian experience awakens us to faith—which, be it remembered, is the soul's natural response to gifts

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, pp. 26–27.

[2] See *Patriotism*, pp. 33–41.

Cp. the Essay entitled "Activity and Substance" in Dr. Schiller's *Humanism*, p. 204.

that make for life—and the revelation which that faith apprehends is the sufficing confirmation of the ideals to which those potencies are, by their very nature, determined.[1]

VII

Two other points call for short notice.

(*a*) The Christian religion comes to man, not merely in private experience, but through events which are parts of the world's order—which are part of history. Therefore, the Christian religion has a certain *positive* character. It is not a speculation, nor does it subsist merely in an inward assurance that all is well:

> "God's in His heaven,
> All's right with the world."

Its "objective aspect" is part of the world's visible order, and, when we make the great affirmations of optimism, our faith affirms a character

[1] I have here attempted to indicate how the Christian religion solves the problem which I believe to be fundamental in every religion.

The attempt makes prominent the cosmological side of the Christian revelation, but it does not in any way exclude the soteriological side, or in any degree diminish the value of it. Sin is one form of the contradiction of Nature against man. It is a contradiction against man's higher self, against the self that claims to be normal. Salvation from sin is one form of Christ's general triumph over the contradiction of Nature.

Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* p. 12.

disclosed to it by facts constituent in the world's history. That character is not inferred to the world from without; we discover it *in* the world—in the historical events wherein the Christian religion subsists.[1]

And we may quite easily define too narrowly the ground of this discovery. That ground is co-extensive with Christian history and Christian experience. Once in time did the Word become flesh and dwell among us, but the truth then wondrously set forth has never been without later witness in the world. We may not—in our apologetic for the faith wherein we live—separate the evangelical facts from the consequent history of Christendom. In that history we have more than an evangelical tradition; we have therein a living experience whereby, in every age and place, men have been brought to accept the evangelical facts in their evangelical meaning, with their evangelical value. That experience, and the grace therein constantly received, are as truly facts in the world's history as the evangelical facts themselves.

Christ is the *object* of our faith; the *ground* of our faith is that constantly renewed experience—*not confined to any one line of Christian succession*—wherein men apprehend Christ.[2]

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* p. 13.
[2] Cp. my *New Way in Apologetic.*

(*b*) When strictly construed, the accepting act of our faith—whatever, in any individual case, be its theological expression—is, I think, discovered to be an acceptance of the Christian system as trustworthy.[1]

The apprehension by our faith is the apprehension of something wherein we are persuaded that we can trust, and that "something" is the Christian line of history—the Christian revelation integral in the series of historical events.[2]

Our certitude that our apprehension of this is a real discovery, and not a delusion, is the proximate

[1] This appears to be the truth indicated by the often-heard contention that the ground of Christian *status* is "acceptance of Christ"—not a mere acceptance of this or that doctrine concerning Him, but acceptance of Christ Himself, of the central fact and indwelling grace that make the Christian system effectually and validly religious.

[2] Our acceptance of particular doctrines, however, has often (I think) a certain measure of independence.

Our assent to certain essential doctrines is involved in our acceptance of the Christian system, and many Romanists would, I think, say that all normal dogmatic assent—or, at least, all that rises above Theism—is assent of this kind. Certain of our dogmatic assents, however, are more or less independently determined by other preliminaries—historical, exegetical, philosophical—and it seems impossible to dismiss this character of those assents as merely a note of aberrant Protestantism.

We may not identify "saving truth" with the whole body of propounded *credenda*, or demand that those *credenda* be accepted *en bloc* by a general act of faith in a Church or a Book.

Even in theology, reason and sound learning—the campaign against "Modernism" notwithstanding—have inalienable and imprescriptible rights.

ground of our Christian belief. But, as a certitude, it is only a psychological ground, and does not infer a validity wherein thought can rest.[1] Why then, do we infer to it such validity? Ultimately, I think, because, for us, the Christian system does, in fact, solve the fundamental problem of religion. It does lift us above the contradiction of Nature, and enable us to *live*—to do our best, in "sure and certain hope." Death, it is true, awaits us all, and we cannot see beyond it, but we see Him whom we believe to be "the Resurrection and the Life," and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we commit unto Him—even our very selves.

We come back then, to human life and the ideals of human life. We cannot believe the one foredoomed to final disappointment, or the other misleading, and, because of this ultimate trust in our nature and vocation, we accept as trustworthy the historical order of grace which, by the renewing of our lives, does in fact lift us above the contradictions to that nature and that vocation, and effectively furthers our growth towards the end which they make normal. Therefore, our Christian faith is a form of Humanism.

[1] Yet inner certitude is the last word of the "Grammar of Assent."

Newman's essay leaves the ultimate problem of religious assent untouched. An inner certitude, in and by itself, is the subjective equivalent of that merely external authority which, in matters political, satisfies only those who do not think.

PART II

I

(*a*) THE assurance which comes to those who are raised above their doubt, by the experience wherein they apprehend the Christian revelation, is an assurance (in one form or another) that the apparent contradiction between man and Nature is not ultimate—is an assurance that the Supreme Reality, which sustains the processes of Nature and predetermines their course, is friendly to us and not hostile, and (because of its essential character) must be sufficingly concurrent with our highest will. This assurance changes the face of the world to us, and, to that chivalrous vocation which Nature aforetime seemed to negative, it gives a prevailing reasonableness.

We have learnt from Him who is the Truth to think of that assuring experience as a new birth. In and through that experience we ourselves are made new; by it we are, as it were, born into a new world. The experience that renews the inward fashion of our hearts also transfigures the outward order of the world—flooding it with a new light, rearranging its values, and enriching it with new values. Concomitant with the new birth is a new

creation—a world transformed to our vision and transvaluated in our thought by the Sovereign Love we have newly learned to trust. The world is transformed to our newly assured thought because it is transvaluated by our assuring experience.

(*b*) Man's valuation of the world is an estimate of its relation to the needs and purposes of his life.

In its ultimate form, *value* is always some satisfying content of experience—some experience that seems good, and gives to life a satisfying quality that makes it worth the living. Values of this ultimate kind are *intrinsically* and *immediately* valuable.

Besides these values, there are other things commonly and rightly prized—*e.g.*, the Church, the Fatherland, the Family—which are not ultimate forms of value, but *means* to such forms. Because these other things are means to ultimate forms of value, they are valuable : because they are valuable we may conveniently call them also *values*. Their value, however, is *extrinsic*, and pertains to them only *mediately*—by inference from the ultimate values to which they are means. The Fatherland, for instance, is a value of this second kind, is a mediate value, because citizenship therein gives to life values of the first kind—values that are intrinsic and immediate.[1]

[1] This gift of value is the ground and occasion of Patriotism. See my *Patriotism*, pp. 15–16.

It follows from this that man's valuation of Nature is always and necessarily anthropocentric, for it is a valuation governed exclusively by his own experience—a valuation relative to the needs and purposes of his own life. Moreover, it is always and necessarily an estimate of *mediate* value—for *that* is the only value things external can possess. When man attempts to appraise the whole of things he judges it as a system of *means*, and inclines to optimism or pessimism according as the mediate values he discovers in that whole seem sufficient or insufficient for the satisfaction of his life.

(*c*) In the Christian conversion from Doubt not only is the soul that aforetime doubted re-born, but the world is (as it were) re-created for him, and, to his purged vision, is seen once more in the primal freshness of her Edenic springtime.

This renewal of the world is a transvaluation of the world—a transvaluation brought about by the discovery of new values. The Christian view of the world contains values which are not perceived by Doubt, or, if perceived, are differently appraised. These distinctive values give to Christian faith its distinctive outlook, and, to the heart that rightly apprehends them, makes all things new—hallowing the cold silences of Nature with the brooding presence of a watchful Love, and the deeper

solitudes of human life with the grace of a Divine companionship.

Chief among these new values is the living Christian Society, wherein and whereby we have been lifted above our doubt into a new life and a new world. In and through that Society we overcome the world and the contradictions of the world, and by this daily victory it has become uniquely precious to us. More than a human fellowship, more than a religious accident in a history characteristically social, it is the ground of our new hope, " the master-light of all our seeing." In it we apprehend the revelation of God and receive His renewing grace : we cannot live and dare not die apart from it. Not yet " without spot and without blemish," often mistaken, often feeble, often prone to unhelpful compromise—despoiled by avarice, injured even when reformed, fettered by the alien powers of secular authority, it is still the True Shekinah, " the pillar and ground of Truth," the home of the world's best life, and in it the revelation of the Cross is daily renewed. Its worship is never-failing refreshment, in its life is ennobling strength, and in its Eucharistic presentation of " ourselves, our souls, and bodies " there is an effectual consecration, constantly renewed, to manhood's highest ends and holiest work. Among all the new values that conversion gives to life, the Living Church has pre-eminent place.

(*d*) " Because our Christian faith has its proximate ground in our experience within the living Christian Society, and its more remote ground in a historical revelation, the Christian religion has a certain positive character comparable with that of the natural sciences. It is *not* merely a speculation, not merely a private illumination; it is a practical trust in the Christian line of history, in a certain succession of actual events, to which—reasonably, as we think—we attribute a certain significance. That succession commenced in Palestine, when the Son of Man went about doing good, and our present experience of grace is part of it. In the world which seems to contradict our vocation we discover that which seems to overcome the apparent contradiction. And what is it that we discover? Jesus, who is called Christ, and the Christian society, and the perduring grace that renews our lives. These are facts in the world's history, and in these do we trust." [1]

II

We have seen that the will of man is always determined to *values*. This implies that man's purposive life is always governed by interest. [2] His primary

[1] *Is the New Theology Christian?* pp. 12–13.

[2] Not always or necessarily by the narrow form of self-interest called selfishness, for man's healthiest interests are not selfish.

interest is to live, and to live valuably—to live some satisfying kind of life, some life that is worth the living. Pessimism—which is a surrender to the apparent contradictions of Nature—asserts that this interest (at least, in its highest forms) is vain and misleading because (according to the interpretations of Pessimism) human life and the values of life are merely accidents of a cosmic process which is indifferent to human welfare and will sooner or later bring every human life and every human hope to final nothingness.

Pessimists do not deny that life does in fact afford values—that every ordinary life-experience (sunless though it often be) does in fact contain something that is good. They assert, however, that actual good is more than outweighed by evil : they think that satisfying experience is too infrequent and too poorly satisfying, and that, therefore, even the actual goodness of life is spoiled by predominant and inevitable disappointment.

In both cosmology and ethics Pessimism is devaluating. In cosmology, Pessimism is a devaluation of the world, because the only mediate values it recognises in the world are (by its own confession) insufficient to satisfy man's primary interest. In ethics, Pessimism is a devaluation of life, because it makes all values equally transient—momentary bye-products in a world they do not illuminate—

and makes the lower the more important because the more easily attainable. Resultant from this devaluation is a corresponding degradation of man's practical interest, because, if all values be transient —if Death extinguish all—there are no " objective " differences of worth between them, and it were folly to forego any.[1]

Christian faith, on the other hand, discovers in the world mediate values—*e.g.*, the Christian Society —which Pessimism fails to discern or (at least) to recognise as effectual *means*, and this discovery arranges Life's *immediate* values in a new order of practical importance. Both Christianity and Pessimism are more than speculative doctrines. Both are estimates of life, both are rules of conduct, but the estimate and precepts of the one differ widely from the estimate and precepts of the other. Each system gives a characteristic direction to human interest.

It follows from all this that in conversion from Doubt to Faith there is always a change of interest.

Christian conversion is not merely conversion to a new assent : it is always conversion to a new trust,[2] a new confidence, a new faith. It is a

[1] This degradation is not always apparent in the lives of Pessimists, for sometimes the natural tendency of Pessimism is counteracted by an alien heroism of moral choice that gives to life no small degree of pathetic dignity.

[2] We assent *because* we trust.

conversion of the heart and will, not only of the mind, and it is always brought about by *values*—by an experience wherein new values become apparent or we learn the true worth of values we had previously recognised but slighted.

Now, man is always interested in whatever seems to be valuable or useful to him. His interest always goes out towards whatever sufficingly promises to satisfy it. Art, for example, is the natural centre or term of the artist's interest, although it leaves the mere mathematician untouched. And, because all men (by the very constitution of their nature) have a primary interest in life and in valuable forms of life, their interest naturally centres (finds its term) in whatever gives (or seems to give) trustworthy promise of making life worth the living—in other words, the direction of their interest is always governed by values, or (more accurately) by their recognition and estimate of values.

When, therefore, the Christian values lead a man from Doubt to Faith, they naturally become the centres of his interest. Conversion gives to interest a new direction, a new centre, a new term. This direction, centre or term is defined by the values (mediate and immediate) that are operative in conversion, and these values are either values newly discovered or familiar values newly estimated at their real worth. We may say, indeed, that

conversion *is* a re-adjustment of man's primary interest to new terms—to new values.[1]

III

(*a*) Why is it that men doubt? In some cases, because of sin, which obscures the higher values that would (if properly apprehended and rightly estimated) move them to obedience.[2] Doubt, however, is not always the result of sin. It seems probable, indeed, that wherever there is Doubt there must be also some defect in character or poverty of experience. This (I think) is probable, for, were neither character nor experience incomplete, the values that are the ground of faith would not be impotent. It is clear, however, that in many cases there is nothing that would ordinarily be called sin. In these cases men doubt because the values—intellectual, artistic, "practical"—that are actually predominant or prepotent in their lives are not the highest values and, therefore, cannot be the ground of Life's highest faith.[3]

[1] In its psychological aspect, the New Birth may be described as a revival and re-adjustment of human powers and interests.

[2] Sometimes sin is not the cause of doubt but its result. When men do not perceive or (although they perceive) do not rightly interpret the values that are the ground of faith, they easily yield themselves (in indifference or despair) to the invitation of Life's lower opportunities.

[3] See note (p. 233), "On Certain Causes of Doubt."

(*b*) In all cases conversion involves or entails, as we have seen, a change of interest. It gives a new determination to life, a new direction to our thought and purpose, and it does this—how? By introducing into life new values and by disclosing an unsuspected meaning and power in values already recognised but previously thought to be unimportant—to be merely insignificant bye-products of the world's evolution, not a revelation of its informing and controlling purpose. By the new loyalty they awaken, these new and increased values recall the aberrant will from sin, and, by the new view of the world which they disclose, they correct the inference of doubt from the lower values they supersede.

That new view of the world is a view open only to faith. "Only to faith?" Yes, only to the faith wherein and whereby those corrective values become effectual.

It is only in and through faith that the Christian values do their appointed work. Consider once more their supersession of Doubt.

We are sometimes told that Doubt arises from the natural and incurable incompetence of Reason to reach ultimate foundations, and that the correction of Doubt must always come from that which is above Reason, from what Mr. Benjamin Kidd—that pretentious prophet of the half-educated!—would

call the Supra-Rational. There is truth in this, but the contrast it makes between Doubt and the faith whereby the Christian values overcome Doubt, although not radically false, is dangerously apt to become misleading.[1] Clearly, Doubt is intellectual, is an act of the mind, but such is also the Christian correction of Doubt, for in that correction we are led to make a new assent—an assent which supersedes our doubt—and that assent, no less than Doubt, is normally intellectual, is normally an act of the mind. This, however, is not the only or the most important resemblance between Doubt and its Christian corrective. Both the assent of Doubt[2] and the assent of faith are always inferences from experience, and, ordinarily, each affirms, not a demonstrated certainty, but a greater probability—or a probability believed to be greater.

Take, for instance, the proposition, "Christ is

[1] The doctrine of the Supra-Rational—like Mr. Balfour's doctrine of "Authority"—has potent attraction, not only for the misunderstanding champions of non-progressive thought, but also for the large numbers who always welcome an excuse for intellectual sloth. Insistence upon it is dangerous because, through the weakness of average human nature, such insistence confirms men in, or inclines them to, obscurantism and superstition.

The Christian religion does not call upon us to forego "sound judgment." He who is the Intelligible Word cannot be best served by unreason.

[2] "The *assent* of Doubt," because Doubt always involves or implies assent to a negative or agnostic proposition.

God." Many affirm this proposition with an assurance that has no defect, and it is rightly propounded dogmatically for our belief, but no proffered demonstration of its truth is comparable in completeness with the demonstrations of Euclid. The best demonstration of it that we can set forth contains links which are not more than probably sound. Our certitude concerning them is a moral certitude, and has its ground, not in some obvious fact or in some necessity of thought, but in what is ordinarily called an act of faith, an act of the will. In other words, the Christian assent is characteristically a pragmatic assent: its ground is in the practical, not in the speculative activities of life.

Similarly, the contradictory proposition, "Christ is not God," cannot be demonstrated with Euclidean conclusiveness. However strong be the argument in its favour, certain links therein—and those the most important, because they are those that exclude the Catholic probabilities—are constituted by judgments belonging to the "practical" order, and those judgments, which seem to carry on the process of demonstration, in fact interrupt it. They are *negative probabilities*, and—like the Catholic probabilities which they purport to exclude—they have their ground, their *ratio credendi*, elsewhere than in that speculative Reason which moves only by the constraint of obvious fact (or of what is thought to

be obvious fact)[1] or by the inner necessities of its own thought.

Again, consider the proposition, "Miracles have not happened"—a proposition sometimes advanced or presupposed with an easy assurance that sets aside discussion. In some cases this proposition is the direct expression of a certain conviction concerning the constitution and course of Nature. Men believe that the essential character of the universe makes every alleged miracle antecedently incredible—incredible, that is, prior to examination of evidence. In other cases men do not assert an antecedent incredibility, but merely an adverse presumption—a presumption which they supplement by the contention that in no alleged case of miraculous happening has the evidence produced ever been sufficient to warrant a reasonable belief that a miracle actually occurred.

Careful analysis would, I think, show that neither the asserted antecedent incredibility nor the alleged insufficiency of evidence has ever been conclusively demonstrated—has ever been demonstrated with the conclusiveness characteristic of the Euclidean demonstrations. Each line of inference—the line of inference to incredibility and the line of inference to insufficiency—contains at least *something*

[1] As when it receives informations from science or common experience.

concerning which there cannot be more than a moral certitude, something which (at the very most) is only probably true. Against this negative probability those who assert the historical reality of miracles place another and countervailing probability, which purports to prevent the inference of disbelief, and this countervailing probability is accepted by those who do accept it, and rejected by those who reject it, in virtue of considerations which have their ground, not in the mind, but in the heart—not in speculation, but in life. For instance, it seems clear that our belief in the primary Christian miracles—the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the wonderful works of Divine compassion—is not imposed upon us by any necessity of thought, and is not exclusively grounded in what men ordinarily call historical evidence. Our belief, indeed, is not independent of such evidence, but it is not characteristically an inference from such evidence. Rather is it a persuasion—a persuasion based in part upon the primitive Evangelical testimony, in part upon the experience of Christians in every later time and in every place, in part upon the relation of those alleged miracles to the ends and endeavours of our human life—to the ends that seem highest, the endeavours that seem worthiest.

Clearly, the *ratio credendi* of the Christian miracles is highly complex, and important elements in it

are " practical," not speculative, judgments—probabilities rather than demonstrated certainties. Those elements become prevailing probabilities, and grounds of a reasonable assent, only in and through the experience which comes to men along a certain way of life—in and through the Christian Society, the witnessing and edifying Church.[1]

In the Christian supersession of Doubt, then, certain negative or agnostic probabilities are set aside by other probabilities of a different kind. Those other probabilities open up to us, through the Evangelical history and the other Christian values, a view of the world which lifts us sufficingly above our doubts. They are, however, thus potent only in and through the life of faith, for only to faith is their greater probability apparent. Indeed, precisely because they are " practical " judgments, they are *essentially* assents or ventures of faith. To evoke and foster faith—the faith wherein alone those probabilities are effectual—is the characteristic vocation of the Christian Church.

IV

We radically misconceive the Christian Society if we suppose it to exist for the sole purpose of edifying men into likeness to a certain moral ideal.

[1] For some account of a general theory of the Christian miracles, see pp. 42–54.

Undoubtedly, it *is* an instrument of moral education. God, whose purpose concerning us is clearly seen in our vocation to goodness, has made His Church ancillary to that purpose, and has set it in the midst of the world "for the healing of the nations,"—to be the home of a higher life than that ordinarily fostered by our secular polities and pursuits, to be a shelter for tender charities that man's aggressive selfishness would crush, to build up men "into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." All earthly polities are preliminary to the City of God, and the living stones rough-hewn by the policies and interests of earth are to be polished and compacted together—each in its own place—by God's master-craftsman, the Church.

But not for this architecture of life alone does the Church exist. The Christian Society is not merely organic to a moral ideal—it is also the guardian and missionary of a cosmological truth and of the revelation which declares that truth.

Man is conscious of his vocation—or, rather, man knows that he has a vocation[1]—and all through the long ages of his history, he has been gradually discovering the nature of it. But, at every stage of his progress, his environment has been more or less plainly in opposition to him, and, as discovery after

[1] Cp. *Is the New Theology Christian ?* pp. 75 and 76.

discovery in his own life lifted his thoughts higher and yet higher, that opposition increased until it became a contradiction. Never has that contradiction seemed more decisive than in these latter years, when Science has disclosed the general downward drift of things material—a drift which seems to sweep right across the path of our upward life.

We come back to the familiar question—Is our transcendent vocation a reasonable vocation? Is it wise to labour for the best? Were it not wiser to gather, without thought, the poorer fruits that the perishing world for a time scatters abundantly about our path? If our lives be essentially involved in that downward drift to sterility, there is no room for discussion. In that case, Epicurus should be our prophet, attainable pleasure the standard of our conduct, and everyone should have complete liberty to interpret "pleasure" for himself, according to the actual propensities of his own individual nature. Were this conclusion generally inferred—and inferred, not hypothetically (as in the last sentence), but categorically—civilisation would either come to an end in a new savagery, or develop into a systematized iniquity such as that which, according to a sensational fancy, found its monument in "Cæsar's Column."

Those of us who are Christians believe, however,

that human life is *not* essentially involved in the downward rush of things, that man's transcendent vocation is a reasonable vocation, that it is wisest to labour for the best, and the ground of our belief is—where ? The ultimate ground of our belief is in God and in the Christian revelation.

Now, the primary duty of the Christian Society is to set forth and commend the Christian revelation. The historical facts wherein that revelation first came to men are in the past, but the revelation itself is perpetually present—present, not merely in a continuous tradition and a propounded doctrine, but in a grace-giving life and in apprehensions that o'erpass the certainties of sense. We who receive it find it thus immediate in and through the life of the missionary Church. Therein the revelation given nineteen centuries ago is unceasingly present : therein Christ draws near to those who need Him, and is " known of them in breaking of bread," in the new gladness of a renewed life, and in the peace which He alone can give.

We think of the Church as witnessing and edifying —witnessing to the evangelical facts, edifying its members in love—and witnessing and edifying it assuredly is. It is, however, primarily missionary. Not that the Church has several vocations—she has but one. That one vocation is this—so to set forth Christ that He shall be, to each succeeding age, the

present "power of God unto salvation." This is the Church's sole vocation, and, although her ministry and life be variously helpful, every form of her helpfulness is part of her missionary work. Only in so far as the Church is effectually missionary is it effectually witnessing and edifying.

This follows from the very nature of the Christian revelation. That revelation was given to the world in and through the Incarnation—in the Person and Life of Our Lord. It is, indeed, present with us now, but not independently of that first gift. Its modern presence does but renew its ancient witness, and make the far-off evangelical years concurrent with our own.

Now, the Incarnation of Our Lord was a *real* Incarnation—not a Docetic theophany, wherein a merely apparent manhood was a transparent veil. The Word *became flesh*, and He whom we believe to be True God was found in fashion as a man—as a carpenter's son, whose reputed brothers and sisters were well-known. Very God, "of one substance with the Father." He was also, really and not apparently, very man—"in a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." This subsistence of God in man was not, however, a perceptible subsistence. Although *actual*—so, at least, we believe it to be—it was not *apparent*, as the visible things of Nature are apparent, and, when apprehended, it

was apprehended by an interpretative act which was essentially an act of inference.[1]

It was by such an act of inference that St. Peter reached the truth which has since become fundamental in the Church's creeds: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God":[2] it is by similar acts, constantly repeated, that the Christian religion lives and spreads. Only by such acts did the first disciples apprehend the revelation of God: only by such acts do we to-day apprehend it, and in each one of us that apprehending inference is original. The faith of the Christian believer to-day does not rest upon a traditional interpretation passively received by him—as though it were a dead gift to the dead, a stone placed in his pocket—but upon new acts of interpretation which are genuinely his own. The evangelical facts, wherein God made Himself known, are past and beyond recall, but the revelation therein given is renewed in every conversion, and in every act whereby men apprehend their Lord.

Now, the Christian Society does not exist *merely* to set forth the evangelical facts, or *merely* to keep

[1] Cp. Dr. Fairbairn's *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, Book II, part II: "The Creation of the Christian Religion by the Interpretation of the Person of Christ." Also Book I, chap. viii.

[2] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, pp. 23-25.

in remembrance those first interpretations which constituted the Christian religion. The evangelical facts, when uninterpreted by faith, do not seem very important. They are attractive, but not beyond (or not much beyond) the attraction of other facts. As reported, they are marvellous, but many other marvellous reports have reached us, and these others we deem misleading. A mere re-statement of the uninterpreted facts—of the " objective " revelation —would avail but little. Nor would it much more avail were it supplemented by a tradition of the first interpretations. St. Peter's interpretation was his own and cannot be ours, nor can the ground of it be the ground of our personal faith.

In so far as we are to-day more than nominally Christian, it is because of an experience which enables us to repeat, for ourselves and as our own, St. Peter's act of apprehension—to reach, for ourselves and by an inference genuinely our own, his interpretation of the Evangelical facts. In each one of us, the act whereby the religious value of Our Lord is apprehended is a personal act, and in each one of us it is original.

Now, the Church's primary duty is so to set forth and commend the evangelical facts that, in every succeeding age, men shall be led to make, for themselves and as their own, those interpreting inferences wherein and whereby alone those facts become an

effectual revelation—wherein and whereby alone the religious value of those facts can be apprehended.[1]

This is the missionary vocation of the Church, and it makes her missionary, not only to " the world," but also to her own members.

The Church is a living society, constituted by the union of Christians with each other and with their Lord. They are united to each other by charity, and to their Lord by faith—by the faith which apprehends Him as He is, and receives the renewing grace of His besetting life.

This apprehension of faith, however, does not take place once for all. Not easily do we men " lay hold on eternal life," nor easily retain our hold. When we attain unto it, all things become new—ourselves and our world alike, but, unless we and our world be daily refreshed by Him who is indeed the Life, we and it alike soon fade, and we find ourselves once more solitary, amid the contradictions of a dying order. It may be that, in some sense, we remain, even then, members of the Christian Society, but

[1] " Our Lord is the co-eternal Son independently of our faith, but He is apprehended as such only by faith. . . " (*A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 23).

Christ has religious value because He is God Incarnate. His essential nature, however, is not patent to ordinary observation, and is discovered only in faith's interpreting inference. Only in and through this inference does the revelation given in His Person become an effectual revelation.

we are *in* that Society rather than *of* it, for we are outside the unity of its living faith.

Men have often described faith as a supernatural gift from Him who ever gives " without repentance," and some have even spoken as though the efficacy of that alleged gift perdured through all the failures of human loyalty, through all aberrations from the Christian way of life, through all interruptions of Christian experience. We should think of it rather as a natural power—a power evoked by grace and sustained in exercise by that which evokes it.

Christian faith and Christian experience are inseparable ; the one lives only in the other. Now, Christian experience takes its distinctive character from the fact that in it Christ is apprehended unto salvation. It is the Christian's experience *of* Christ —his experience *with* Christ. We attain unto this experience through the missionary work of the Church, wherein Christ is " evidently set forth," and we cannot have this experience apart from that setting-forth, because, unless Christ be in some sufficient way evident unto us, we cannot have either experience of Him or experience with Him. It is through Christian experience that we become, by the faith which that experience evokes, living members of Christ's Living Body, but we continue to be living members in that sacred fellowship only if that incorporating experience be continually renewed.

Now, a renewal of Christian experience is a new experience of Christ " evidently set forth "—a new experience *with* Him, and this new experience is brought about (as was the original experience) by the Church's missionary " exhibition " of her Lord. Our Christian experience, throughout its entire course (not only in its commencement, but also in all its subsequent renewals) is brought about by the missionary work of the Church—by the work wherein Christ is " set forth " with power for man's salvation, is " lifted up " to draw all men unto Him. Therefore, the Church is constantly missionary to her own members, not less truly than to the world.[1]

V

The Church, we have seen, lives and grows by interpretative acts which repeat the inference wherein the first believers received the revelation of God—the inference whereby they discovered in their Master the Divine character, the subsistent Divine fact, which made Him that revelation. Through such acts, perpetually repeated, does the Church perdure ; by such acts is her living fellowship extended and sustained ; her primary vocation is to induce such acts.

[1] It follows, from what has been said in this paragraph, that the organic unity of the Church subsists in and through what our nearer forebears called " personal religion."

How does the Church fulfil this vocation? How does she evoke the interpretations wherein Christians recognize their Lord? How does she move men to make the Christian recognitions?

We will commence our reply by asking another question: What made the first disciples Christian? To this question the answer seems clear: They became Christian because of the impression immediately made upon them by Christ while yet "personally present upon earth." That impression indicated the fulfilment of the Messianic hope, and transformed the culminating act of Jewish faith into the first Catholic confession. And the ordinary ways of Christian thinking might easily lead us to say that not otherwise have later generations been effectively "baptized into Christ." Our Lord, although no longer visibly present upon earth in the body of His humiliation, is (we believe) actually present in His Church—thereby fulfilling His own words, "Lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world," —and every page of spiritual biography bears witness to the fact that the impression of His personality upon believing hearts since His return unto His Father has been no less real, no less potent, than it was during His earthly sojourn. Like the first disciples, men of to-day are Christian—so we easily incline to think—because, in some sufficient sense, they have seen and handled the Word of Life. Nor

need we hesitate to believe that, in some sufficient sense, they *have* done this. It seems clear, however, that the experience thus described is not the experience that *evokes* our faith, for it includes at least one recognition—the recognition of the presence of Christ—that cannot be made except *by* faith.

That Christ is actively present in His Church is, indeed, a commonplace of Christian thought, but no one not a Christian, no one unconverted,[1] can recognise His presence. Therefore, the recognition of His presence cannot be a factor in conversion ; rather is it a result and sign of conversion. What is afterwards interpreted to have been the present power of Our Lord is undoubtedly a factor in every Christian conversion from doubt to faith, but it is present therein anonymously, and not until its work is effective is its true nature recognised. Whatever be its impression upon the heart, that impression—afterwards designated, though it be, the impression of Christ—is not operative *as the impression of Christ*, but as the impression of an unnamed power.

Let us, then, set aside the translating re-presentations of ordinary theological discourse, and

[1] By " conversion " I mean the process whereby a man is led to make, for himself and as his own, the inference that apprehends the Christian revelation—the inference wherein and whereby the Christian revelation becomes to him an effective revelation.

endeavour to describe the factors in conversion as they appear during the process of conversion.

The principal factors are, I think, these :

(1) The Church's presentation of the Christian *credenda.*

(This presentation is a re-presentation

(*a*) of the evangelical facts wherein the Christian revelation was (as we believe) given ;

(*b*) of the " recognitions " wherein alone (from the first days until now) that revelation has been apprehended, and by which the Christian religion is constituted, and the Christian Society continuously built-up ;

(*c*) of the definitions by which the Church has sought to safeguard the content of — the truth reached by — those " recognitions.")

(2) The Church's life, informed by charity and articulate in worship.

(This is operative in two ways: through experience and through history.

In its own experience—within[1] or in contact

[1] Most members of the Christian Society enter that Society in their earliest days by baptism, before they are capable of that original and personal act of apprehension

with the Christian Society—the heart that is being converted discovers for itself the distinctive spiritual values of the Christian life, and not only feels their power within itself, but beholds the effects of their power in other hearts.

The lessons thus learned in individual experience are confirmed by history, which exhibits an unceasing miracle, namely, the triumph of Christian lives (in every time and place, and in every condition of worldly fortune) over "principalities and powers," and "the world-rulers of this darkness," and even over Death itself.)

(3) An uplifting power—the effectual energy of a new life—which seems to come into the heart from above, and not to be original therein.[1]

wherein alone the Christian revelation can be effectively received. Baptism is the rite of initiation, but Churchmanship becomes *complete* only when baptism is followed by that personal apprehension of Christ which is the characteristic note of "conversion." This may come either dramatically, and after lapse, or imperceptibly—without any apparent break in the continuity of religious experience.

Infant baptism has often been adversely criticised, but it seems clear that something not altogether trivial can be said for a practice which—*were the church what it should be*—would surround a child, from the first hours of its life, with all that is most conducive to "conversion," to what Newman would have called a *real apprehension* of our Lord. There is no ground for thinking that "conversion" must, of necessity, be an adult experience.

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, pp. 24-26.

It is by their co-operation within a heart conscious of one kind or another of religious need that these three complex things—the Church's presentation of Christ, her life and history, and the grace-bearing power that dwells within her—bring about the Christian conversion from Doubt, awaken a faith which repeats St. Peter's faith and apprehends in Christ the effectual revelation of God.

But in what manner, by what processes within such a heart, do they induce this result ?

In every conversion from Doubt to Christian faith there is a change in what, without fear of being misunderstood, we may conveniently although (it may be) not quite accurately designate the heart's external relations. There is always a turning from things that induce Doubt to things that induce faith—a turning to God, to the Christian revelation, to the Living Society wherein that revelation is " evidently set forth." This external change is the result of an inner change, of a change which can be best described as an awakening of new receptivities. In this awakening—or, more accurately, as the result of it—the heart which thus becomes more receptive apprehends the revelation of God.

The process is not unlike that by which our human hearts are sometimes quickened to apprehend human love.

In some cases Love comes gently to gentle hearts

already prepared for it—to hearts already sensible of that higher poetry in things which makes the world nobly romantic, to hearts already kindly with the gracious charities and helpful faith that are the preambles of Love—and to those hearts Love's new day is but the full splendour of a long-familiar light that has never set. In other cases, however, Love comes imperially, as a life-giving lord,—touching blind eyes into sight, melting pride into reverence, and hardness into tender strength, breaking the bonds of selfishness and pouring into the heart the transforming energy of a nobler hope and of a purpose that will one day make the tare-sown fields of Time heavy with a priceless harvest. But, whatever be the manner of its coming, Love is always a quickening light, revealing values before unknown, and awakening finer susceptibilities, whereby the heart it makes perceptive apprehends in things seen and felt the sure tokens of a truth hidden " from the wise and prudent "—of a truth which " the world cannot receive."

In ways like unto these does the grace of God come to men. Sometimes it comes " without observation," to hearts already naturally Christian—so quietly that we scarcely know it to be there until some sudden challenge from Life's baser depths calls out its august strength. And sometimes it comes dramatically, in storm and earthquake, in purifying

fire and the agony of a bitter shame—shattering man's pleasure-houses, breaking-up the foundations of his familiar world and of the strength wherein he trusted. But, whatever be the manner of its coming, the grace of God " is always a quickening light, revealing values before unknown, and awakening finer susceptibilities, whereby the heart it makes perceptive apprehends in things seen and felt the sure tokens of a truth hidden ' from the wise and prudent '—of a truth which ' the world cannot receive.' "[1]

This awakening of life's finer receptivity " changes the world to a man,"[2] for the values therein apprehended—the Christian revelation, the Church wherein that revelation is daily renewed,[3] and the

[1] We may usefully say that the primary Christian assents are pragmatic. It should, however, be remembered that, if pragmatic assent be valid, the ground of its validity does not lie in the psychological facts which, in this or that particular case, move us to pragmatic assent, nor yet in the immediate usefulness of this or that assent. The validity of pragmatic assent can be demonstrated (if at all) only by a general philosophy which shows pragmatic assent to be reasonable. We may never substitute Will for Reason, or Utility for Truth. Pragmatism does not change the definition of Truth: it does but indicate new ways of approach to Truth.

[2] Cp. pp. 193–194.

[3] The historical events wherein the Christian revelation came to man are in the past, but they are perpetually set forth by the Church. Moreover, the Church does not merely safeguard the memory of a past history: she so influences the hearts of men that the events which she sets forth

distinctive excellences of the Christian life—are (in them co-operation)[1] significant values, and re-translate experience. This re-translation gives us a new world—a world of which the essential character is indicated, not by the slow katabolism of its physical processes, but by that slow increase of transcendent purpose which has made its later history romantic—not by the heedlessness of Nature, nor by the selfish lusts of men, but by that devious development towards charity which has given us all that is best in national and individual life.[2]

That new world is still our old world. It is still an unkindly place for the poor, the unfriended, the unprivileged. Nature still seems heedless of our moral distinctions, indifferent to our moral aims; the pride, the lust, the selfishness of men are still (for a time) triumphant, and still (for a time) has love to suffer. The contradictions between our vocation and our experience (which aforetime engendered Doubt) still remain, but side by side

become to each succeeding generation, as to the first Christian believers, the efficacious revelation of God. In this way is the evangelical revelation constantly renewed in the Church, to believing hearts. Therefore, we rightly say that the Church continues the work of the Incarnate Life. Therefore, we may rightly designate her the Vicegerent of God.

[1] *Vide* pp. 217–219.
[2] *Vide* the general argument of my *Patriotism*.

with those contradictions,[1] we now discern other things which are not contradictions, and those other things (*not* the contradictions) are the key to the world's meaning—through those other things (*not* through the contradictions) we reach the final cause of the world's perplexing history.

Sometimes, it is true, when "the world is too much with us," our vision of those other things grows faint, and the darkness of resurgent Doubt begins to gather once more about us. But that which first gave us vision can also restore vision, and, if we bring our need anew to the altar of God and anew seek refreshment in the life of His Church,[2] the

[1] "Because our Christian faith has its proximate ground in our experience within the living Christian society, and its more remote ground in a historical revelation, the Christian religion has a certain positive character comparable with that of the natural sciences. It is *not* merely a speculation, nor merely a private illumination: it is a practical trust in the Christian line of history, in a certain succession of actual events, to which—reasonably, as we think—we attribute a certain significance. That succession commenced in Palestine, when the Son of Man went about doing good, and our present experience of grace is part of it. In the world which seems to contradict our vocation we discover that which overcomes the apparent contradiction. And what is it that we discover? Jesus, who is called Christ, and the Christian Society, and the perduring grace that renews our lives. These are facts in the world's history, and in these do we trust" (*Is the New Theology Christian?* p. 12-13.)

[2] For the Christian revelation to be constantly effectual within our lives, our participation in the mediating life of the Christian Society must also be constant.

obscuring pre-occupations of earth will cease and our uplifted eyes will once more discern—what? That land which is "very far off," and yet the world's refreshing continent—"the holy city, the New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God"—the "one increasing purpose," working out its way (even through the contradictions that seem the denial of it) and (even here and now) building up human hearts, through love and the things that make for love, into that sacred fellowship which (after the present fabric of things visible has vanished) will remain, to all eternity, the manifest City of God.

VI

It is in this way that the new values operative in the Christian conversion from Doubt change the world to a man. They transform the aspect of the world and transfigure its processes, so that, where we once saw only mindless contradiction, we now discern the providence of a saving purpose.

Moreover, the values which thus re-interpret the world also "enlarge life," and bring into it if not a "great inspiring motive," then, certainly, the strength of a new hope.

The contradiction of man's transcendental vocation by Nature—unless and until it be overcome—

at once narrows and impoverishes his life. The seemingly mindless negatives of the world, while uncorrected, either deny him opportunity for anything but his poorer life, or leave open only opportunities that seem ironical.[1] An opportunity that is only a momentary break in the downward rush of things is *not* an opportunity—not the opportunity that our life requires.

This outward limitation necessarily brings about an inward impoverishment. When only half the possibilities of life seem practicable, half the powers of life are wasted, and capacities that seem appointed to be the fruitful glory of our days yield only embittering disappointment.

Now, the values that restore to the world its romantic possibilities restore also to man his life's romantic opportunities, and, by thus quickening to

[1] Only if the order of Nature be essentially not merely spiritual but moral can it give sufficing opportunity for the higher spiritual capacities of human nature.

In a "naturalistic" world a preference for the values we now deem higher would be merely an idiosyncrasy of this or that individual life. The majority of men—but slightly raised "above the dark edges of the sensual ground"—would incline to think those values not worth the cost of attainment, and would be disposed to content themselves with lower and more easily attainable values. Thus their lives would tend to become narrow and impoverished.

Unless the ultimate Reality be effective Love, we cannot be certain that, sooner or later, it will not—either from irony or from indifference—bring our highest endeavour to failure, our fairest hopes to final disappointment.

fruition powers aforetime sterile, they correspondingly enlarge and enrich his life. Hence, the Christian religion—when protestant against Naturalism or a merely intellectual Enlightenment—is always a form of Romance, for it is a protest on behalf of ideals which those poorer interpretations of the world set aside, of feelings which they de-value, of impulses for which they provide no opportunity, or only an insufficient opportunity.

Naturalism, and that fettered Thought which deems itself pre-eminently free, severally make the world a prison—a prison wherein the better half of life withers. The Church's protest against them is virtually a plea for a larger world and a fuller, more generous life—a plea for the poetry of faith's insight, and the chivalry of faith's endeavour, against the dull prose that dare not move beyond its own dull syllogisms and against the unadventurous prudence that remains content within life's nearer and poorer possibilities.

Now, the Christian values that re-interpret the world, and disclose its higher opportunities, concomitantly restore to life its natural fulness by awakening into effectual activity the powers that Naturalism and rationalistic ways of thinking would leave unused and sterile. Indeed, they are effectually operative in correction of Doubt only in and through this quickening of life's higher potencies.

Their transfiguration of the world is apprehended as a sufficient re-interpretation of the world only by hearts that they themselves have thus renewed into fulness of life.

For the Christian values, however, to be thus effectually operative within the heart, they must be apprehended in their true nature—not merely as values, but as pre-eminent values. Only those who apprehend Christ as He really is, receive the full "benefits of His passion." Now, we have seen somewhat of the process of conversion—something of the way in which men are brought to apprehend the Christian values effectually. They apprehend those converting values in and through an "awakening of life's finer receptivity,[1] and in this awakening they behold a transfigured world whose re-discovered opportunities prevailingly invite the energies that Doubt restrained—romantic Nature appealing to romantic Life—and this liberation of unused powers fills the garners of Life with a new and overflowing harvest.

VII

The liberation, by conversion, of the powers made inactive by Doubt not only enlarges life, but gives to it a new strength—a strength which is native

[1] Dare we say, "Of life's romantic insight"?

within the heart that is renewed, although it is daily refreshed and sustained from without.[1]

Professor Black—in his interesting book, *Culture and Restraint*,[2] refers this new strength to our love for God, which he conceives to be a motive. According to him, conversion gives to life a *new* motive, a " great inspiring motive "—love for God—and the new strength of our renewed lives is, in each case, the strength of that new motive. If, however, the account we have given of the Christian conversion from Doubt be correct, that new strength is the strength, not of a new motive, but of a new and better activity.

Doubt, we have seen, always tends to make life narrower and poorer, because it leaves the higher possibilities of human nature without hopeful opportunity. Conversion, however—by its discovery of the world's higher opportunities—awakens us to " sure and certain hope," and that new hope calls out into new and fruitful effort the powers which Doubt left sterile. Their hopeful activity is our new strength.

The faith wherein we apprehend the revelation of God, and are quickened to clearer vision and better hope, is but the *occasional cause* of that

[1] That is, by the grace of God.
[2] *Culture and Restraint*, Chap. XII.

strength. The original source of it is in the potencies—the developing possibilities—of the human spirit.

The life of man is always, and by its very nature, an idealism, for the spirit of man is essentially a *potency* which only gradually passes into *act*[1]—is essentially a developing principle which only gradually grows towards its own completeness. The strength of human life is the strength of its active potencies, of its developing possibilities: the new strength of the life that the Christian values have made new is the strength of that life's higher potencies, of its better possibilities—of the possibilities aforetime made ineffectual by Doubt but now quickened into a fruitful activity by a God-given hope, and daily sustained therein by a God-given grace.

The human spirit is so constituted that the development of potency into act—of possibilities into actualities, of incompleteness towards completeness—is natural to man. That development is, indeed, often hindered by Doubt and prevented by Sin, but, when these are overcome, the potencies they had made ineffectual become effectual, and by this liberation life becomes, not only larger, but stronger.

As the new strength thus given to life is evoked

[1] For "potency" and "act," see *Patriotism*, pp. 35-40.

by grace,[1] so, also, is it sustained by grace—by the grace we receive in and through the Christian Society, by the grace we receive along the common ways of life, through daily offices of charity and exercises of faith.

Through the latter experience of grace—through our discovery of a Divine bounty in the common interests and pursuits that we ordinarily call secular —our re-interpretation of Nature becomes complete. The world seems to us, no longer a foreign field, but a place prepared for us. The grace that saved us through the Church is *there* also—meeting us in the busiest intercourse of men and along lonely paths of solitary endeavour. Moreover, in the Church and in the world alike, that grace always comes to us as a strengthening grace,—as one that confirms our higher potencies, that renews our trust in the natural idealism of our lives, in the upward promptings of our better possibilities. In this way, the whole environment of life becomes sacramental to us, for in our daily commerce with the world, and otherwise within the Church, the Bread of Life is daily broken for our need.

When we have made discovery of this besetting help, we walk in the world with a new reverence, for every place is holy ground, and through every heart comes some whisper of Our Father's voice,

[1] By the grace operative in conversion.

inviting to that heart a love which He will never leave unsupported.

Our strength, then, is our own, for it is native within us, and yet it is not our own, for its daily food is supernatural. That Divine Gift comes to us through the visible order which the love of God has made provident for our needs—through the Christian Society wherein Our Lord is " evidently set forth," through the secular forms of human intercourse and fellowship wherein He meets with us " by the way." *There*, in the midst of that visible order, is the appointed refreshment for our strength, just as the appointed refreshment for our faith is in the visible society of the Catholic Church, and each refreshment we receive in proportion to our love. " In proportion to our love ? " Yes, for it is love alone—this human love of ours for those who are nearest to us and for those who stand with us in the sacred kinship of country and race, this human love of ours for things " lovely," for things " honourable and of good report "—it is this alone that can apprehend the Divine Love, that can reach unto its effectual presence at the heart of life's commonplace, that can discern its inviting approach in the Church's daily ministry and witness.

Through love, then—through our human love—the Divine response to our religious need becomes an effectual response. But love is the consummating

ideal of human life—in and through love we grow towards our life's completeness. Therefore,

(1) Man's religious need and his moral aspiration are, in their highest forms, coincident, and

(2) The Church, which edifies man into love in order that he may therein apprehend the revelation of God, is (by that moral efficacy) the fostering home of his noblest progress.

VIII

The contradictions of the world led us to doubt whether the transcendental ideals which our nature makes apparently sovereign in our lives are really valid ideals : the Christian conversion from Doubt restores our confidence in those ideals, and enables us to follow them in a new strength and " in sure and certain hope." Because God " so loved the world " that " He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," we infer that He will not finally disappoint the lives He has Himself created, and has led thus far upon their upward course by means of powers He has Himself given.[1] We infer, in fact, that the ends which are normal for our nature are not only our ends but God's—terminal to His purpose as to our desire—and in His hands we are safe :

[1] Cp. *A New Way in Apologetic*, p. 19.

. . . " We falter on
Through storm and mire:
Above, beside, around us, there is One
Will never tire.
What though we *fall*—and bruised and wounded lie
Our lips in dust!
God's arm shall lift us up to victory!
In Him we trust.
For neither life, nor death, nor things below,
Nor things above,
Can ever sever us, that we should go
From His great love."

ON CERTAIN CAUSES OF DOUBT (p. 199).

Each of the great forms of human activity—whether secular or religious—appeals to some particular human interest or group of human interests; each has its own way of approach to truth and its own *criterion* of truth.

(*a*) The Christian religion makes its own characteristic appeal to men. That appeal is not merely, not even distinctively, an ethical appeal. It *is* an ethical appeal, for it is in part the appeal of life's highest ideal to manhood's highest possibilities, but it is much more than an ethical appeal. It is distinctively an appeal to the spiritual interests that arise out of a certain human need. That need—whether it be discovered in doubt or in sin—is a need for assistance.

Now, the need for assistance is fundamental in all vital religion,[1] and, in one form or another, it is an universal need, but it is far from being universally recognised. The cause of this non-recognition is probably moral. We are gradually discovering that

[1] See pp. 178–183.

the great majority of people have no intellectual interests worth speaking of. If it be an end of education to awaken intellectual interest, it is clear that our present system of education, from the Universities to the village schools, fails deplorably—I had almost said "contemptibly." But not only are most people without intellectual interests: large numbers are also without moral interests. Indeed, the former deficiency is, in part at least, a result of the latter, for there can hardly be a sincere and deep interest in the moral issues and alternatives of life without some awakening of reflective thought, and, when such a moral interest does not exist, life is without one of the most important sources of intellectual interest.

I do not suggest that the world to-day is conspicuously wicked. Men are not unmindful of the cruder proprieties; there is an average decency of behaviour which (if not inspiring) is not despicable; there is an active philanthropy which is often very mischievous. All this, however, is largely an unreflective routine—a routine that involves no effort and indicates no aspiration. Even our humanitarianism is a sentiment rather than a moral conviction. We may say, if we will, that (in certain particulars) the standard of conduct is higher than it at one time was, but, nevertheless, throughout wide ranges of society, the sense of duty is feeble and the higher spiritual ideals are unperceived.

What is the cause of this? One cause, at least, is obvious. If the world's moral life does not rise above the easy levels of unaspiring commonplace, it is partly because we who profess and call ourselves Christians are not what we ought to be. We are called unto a more excellent way, and, although we do not entirely disregard

our vocation, we follow it timorously. We are too apt to compromise, too ready to accommodate ourselves to the world's less excellent way. Ours it should be to illustrate " the beauty of holiness " : we are content if we achieve respectability. Not only should we be missionaries of Christian truth : we should be exemplars of the Christian life. Were we adequately this, the world would at least learn that there *is* another standard than its own, an excellence that its conventions cannot define.

As yet the world seems not to have learnt this, or to have learnt it but imperfectly and ineffectively. Content within its narrow round of small proprieties, it is untroubled by sin, and is unmoved by the contradiction of Nature against the vocation it does not hear. It knows not its own need, and is, therefore, easily incredulous of a message adapted to that need. The Christian religion exists to save men from their sins and to lift them above their doubts, but, to men unconscious of sin and unvexed by doubt, its message must inevitably seem but " sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." They cannot discern the ground of faith or understand the credentials of faith. To a world not aware of its own insufficiency, Christ cannot be either " the wisdom of God " or " the power of God." The world's indifference to Christian truth is in great part caused by its ignorance of the Christian life, and for that ignorance we, who know what the Christian life is and yet fail to set it forth, are largely responsible.

(*b*) Not only does the Christian religion make a distinctive appeal : it has a distinctive way of approach to truth and a distinctive criterion of truth. It is characteristically a religion of faith ; its immediate

ground is in a personal experience which is incommunicable; its "evidences" have the logical value, not of demonstrations, but of probabilities.[1] Now, the world, no less than the Church, lives by faith, and its characteristic "certainties," like those of the Church, are no more than probabilities.[2] But the world does not know this. To itself, it seems to be guided, not by faith, but by observation; the "certainties" it discovers appear demonstrative; when it trusts itself to a conjecture, it always believes verification to be close at hand.

"Observation, demonstration, verification"—these are the watchwords of the world's everyday life, these indicate its method and furnish its criterion, and that method and that criterion seem sufficiently established by the practical achievements of the world's every-day work.

The world, precisely because it is the world, has not the distinctive interests, the recognised needs, to which the Christian religion appeals. Within its own range of interest, its own methods and its own criterion seem sufficient. Not unnaturally, then, it is incredulous when we speak to it of another method and another criterion.

When life is pre-occupied with some interest that is sufficingly satisfied by one mode of approach to truth, there is a natural unwillingness to accept discoveries which appeal only to another interest and have been made in another way. Pre-occupation with one successful method naturally tends to incredulity of another.

[1] See p. 205.
[2] See p. 15.

When such an incredulity is incredulity of Christian doctrine, it is not infrequently designated "intellectual doubt," because it finds expression in a theoretical criticism of the Christian evidences, but, proximately or remotely, it is conditioned by moral facts. The world's predisposition against the witness of Christian faith has moral causes, and chief among those causes is the Church's failure to set forth the Christian life adequately and to commend her truth by her love.

Appendices

THE MEDIATING CHURCH

(*Reprinted, by permission, from "The Church Times."*)

Dr. Clifford has told us—in the Angus Lectures for 1906[1]—that the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood is the characteristic note of the Christian religion. Indeed, a hasty perusal of the Lectures might easily lead one to suppose that, in Dr. Clifford's opinion, that doctrine and the group of ideas naturally connected with it constitute the whole doctrinal content of the Christian religion. That supposition would, I think, be erroneous—it is sufficiently clear that Dr. Clifford's own belief is not thus limited—but the very great prominence given by Dr. Clifford to the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood might fairly be pleaded in excuse of the mistake.

Now, it is undoubtedly true that the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is fundamental in the

[1] *The Fundamental Problems of Christianity*, by the Rev. John Clifford.

Christian religion, but it is not the characteristic note of the Christian religion, and not by it is that religion made what it distinctively is and ever has been.

The conception that God is our Father is, I have said, fundamental in the Christian religion, for it is by this conception that Christianity meets man's deepest and most characteristic needs ; but it meets those needs, not by the mere proclamation of an idea, but by setting forth the Divinely-given confirmation of that idea. The Christian religion not only tells us that God is our Father, but presents a sufficing assurance that He is,—an assurance given, once for all, in the Person of Our Lord, who, being very God, became man that He might manifest the love of God towards us, and, by His condescension, gave final evidence that the ultimate reality of the Universe is what we have longed to apprehend it as being, what the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood declares it to be.

The Christian religion, then, is characteristically the religion of the Incarnation : it accomplishes its work—the work proper to it as a religion—through the witness and power of the Incarnate Life. The ultimate truth that the Christian religion exists to set forth comes to us effectually—as that which in fact saves us from doubt and from sin, and not merely as an opinion more or less probable—through

right apprehension of the Person of Our Lord, through such an apprehension as St. Peter had when he made that great confession which has become normal for Christian faith.

But how can we to-day attain to such an apprehension? The answer is clear: through the witness and grace-giving life of the Christian Society, the society known as the Church Catholic. The Christian Society—missionary from the very beginning, and from its very nature as a body edified by a love which, although more than the love of man to man, certainly includes that love—is primarily a witnessing society. It exhibits the evangelical facts, and it exhibits those facts, not merely in their outward character as observable events, but in their essential character as a revelation. Now, because the Incarnation was a real Incarnation, and not a Docetic theophany, that essential character was occult, not manifest. Of the thousands who beheld Our Lord and listened to His words, only a few apprehended the secret of His nature. Their apprehending faith created the Christian religion, and the Church to-day, when it sets forth the evangelical facts, sets them forth as interpreted by that faith—it propounds to the world its own earliest recognitions. The Gospel was latent in the evangelical facts, independently of the faith which discovered it therein, but it became effectual only through that

faith—through the faith which discovered the evangelical facts to be divine.

And the Gospel can become effectual for us only in like manner, only through the apprehending recognition of our interpretative faith. Our Lord will effectually be to us what He was to St. Peter—"Christ, the Son of the Living God"—only if, in some sufficient way, we repeat St. Peter's faith. "*Repeat* St. Peter's faith?" Yes, for the faith whereby another apprehends the revelation given in the Person of Our Lord, although it suffice for him, cannot suffice for us. It makes the Gospel effectual in *his* life; it cannot make the Gospel effectual in *ours*. The Divine fact which makes Christ our Saviour, and His Person the revelation of the Divine Fatherhood, can be apprehended, not mediately by another's faith, but only by an act which is the agent's very own. Now, the faith of the first believers had its historical ground in their personal intercourse with Our Lord. Such a ground *we* cannot have. What, then, is the ground of our faith? What is it that to-day enables men effectually to repeat St. Peter's discovery?

Men are variously led to Christ, but, however various the factors in conversion, that which makes conversion and the resultant confession of Our Lord alike reasonable is the continuous life and ministry

of the Christian Society. That Society had its historical ground in the interpreting faith of the first disciples. It sets forth the evangelical facts (which are the ground of our hope) as those facts were apprehended by that faith—not in the crude "objectivity" which a neutral spectator could describe, but in that Divine character which alone makes them evangelical and only faith can discern. Not only, however, does the Christian Society thus set forth the revelation of God; it also prepares us to apprehend that revelation. By the Church's unceasing witness, and by the discipline of her distinctive life, human hearts are to-day so quickened that men still discover in the evangelical facts those "objective" Divine values which aforetime made evident in those facts the saving love of God, and by the grace which the Church mediates and ministers there is renewed in human hearts, even to-day, the great experience of those who first "passed from death unto life."

Our fellowship in the Christian Society, then, is not a mere consequence of our Christian life. Through that fellowship there is renewed in us the faith out of which the Church arose and by which it is continued: through that renewal the revelation of God is itself perpetually renewed, for, through each renewal of the faith which rightly apprehends the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that

Incarnation is newly made apparent and becomes newly effectual. We who are to-day Christians are Christians, not because we accept a certain tradition —a certain reported interpretation of past events— but because of a present experience wherein we apprehend for ourselves the religious value of those events. The veridical character of that experience is inseparable from the continuous life and work of the Catholic Church.

Men are variously led to Christ, but, however they be led, that which makes their faith a reasonable faith is the perpetual renewal of the witness of the Incarnation within the Christian Society. Apart from that renewal, our religious experience would, at the best, be only an uplifting emotion which would leave doubt unanswered and still formidable : because of that renewal it has objective value, and in it we apprehend, through the Person of Our Lord, the essential character of the Reality that sustains and controls the world.

Because the Catholic Church is thus the Living Society which (as nothing else can) mediates to men to-day the revelation given once for all in and through the Incarnate Life, that Church is the ground of our Christian belief ; from our experience within the mediating Church our Christian apologetic should start ; into the fellowship of that Church our religious teaching should lead.

THE CATHOLIC CONSCIOUSNESS

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There is a general agreement to-day, among competent thinkers, that man is normally social, and that the constitutive bond of social union is always a spiritual bond. A nation, for example, *is* a nation, not merely because its members have a common geographical home, nor yet merely because they acknowledge one common sovereignty, but (primarily and essentially) because of certain common interests and sympathies which make men partners in a general life—co-efficient integrals in a living organism.[1] What is true of the nation is true of every form of human society.

Again, because social forms of life subsist in and through the affections and activities of man, it follows that to every such form of life there is a corresponding kind of consciousness, a kind wherein men know themselves to be members of *this* society, and not of *that*.

Now, the Catholic Church is a living society—a form of social life. What is the character of the corresponding consciousness? What is the Catholic consciousness?

[1] See *Patriotism*, Chap. II, "The Nation as a Moral Organism."

Clearly, the Catholic consciousness is a form of the Christian consciousness—of that consciousness wherein men know Christ to be their Saviour. The Christian consciousness, however, is not, in and by itself, always or necessarily a social consciousness. In a believer genuinely Catholic his Christian consciousness is part of his social Catholic consciousness, and is inseparable therefrom. But, among believers who are outside the visible unity of the One Church, the Christian consciousness is often markedly individualistic. It is genuinely, even if not completely, Christian, but it is not distinctively the consciousness of an experience essentially social and of participation in a social life.

What, however, the separatist consciousness is *not*, the Catholic consciousness *is*. It is a Christian consciousness which is also a social consciousness. It is the correlate of a social experience wherein Christ is apprehended unto salvation. Where it is found, it is not something separate from the Christian consciousness : it is the Christian consciousness in a Catholic form. It is consciousness of membership in a living Society, and it is more than that, for its distinctive, its Catholic, note is this—the elements in it which make it Christian are inseparable, in fact and for apologetic thought, from those which make it social. The Catholic consciousness is the correlate of Catholic experience, and in that

experience the social factors mediate the Christian. To the believer who has this consciousness, the Church mediates the evangelical revelation: his experience within the Living Church is the ground of his Christian faith.

The Catholic consciousness, then, is consciousness of membership in that Living Body which is "the pillar and ground of truth." It arises, not out of intellectual assent to Catholic doctrine, but out of a recognised dependence of Catholic assent upon the present life of the mediating Catholic Society—that visible Society which is the ground of faith, and of which the witnessing authority subsists, not merely in a literary tradition, but in a besetting and informing ministry of grace.

This consciousness is the ultimate safeguard of loyalty in times of weakness and confusion: in the feebleness or absence of that consciousness men find lamentable opportunity for mistakes that sometimes make loyalty difficult.

PRAGMATISM AND "THE HISTORICAL CHRIST"

It has been said that Pragmatism depreciates "the historical Christ."

I do not know whether there is *any* form of Pragmatism of which this is true. Certainly, it is *not* true of the form indicated in these pages.

It is generally admitted that, in its essential character, the distinctive Christian assent is an act of faith. Now, an act of faith is an act wherein we adventure beyond the limits of certainty, and accept —as regulative for thought or practice, or for both— a probability which purports to meet our need, to confirm our aspiration, to make our obstructed purpose hopeful. Our accepting act of faith is acceptance of a probability because of its helpfulness.[1] Therefore, faith is essentially pragmatic.

One of our most urgent needs to-day—and certainly our most fundamental need—is that which arises out of the seeming contradiction between the neutral katabolism of Nature and our moral vocation. That need is met by " the historical Christ," who, because He was God Incarnate—incarnate from love to man—gives us a " full, perfect, and sufficient " assurance that our highest ideals are trustworthy. It is by an act of faith—by an act essentially pragmatic—that we apprehend the revelation given in and by His Person. In these pages and elsewhere[2] I have suggested that this apprehension normally has its ground in the life of the witnessing and edifying Church, and is a reasonable

[1] This, I think, is the truth obscurely indicated by the apologetic " appeal to experience."

[2] See *A New Way in Apologetic* and *Is the New Theology Christian ?*

apprehension because thus grounded. But, however reasonable it be, it is essentially a pragmatic apprehension, and is misleading unless its context —the historical Incarnation—be "objectively" real.

I have not attempted to surmise whether any other pragmatist form of Apologetic is possible, but it seems clear that to *this* form the "historical Christ" is *essential.*

THE END

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